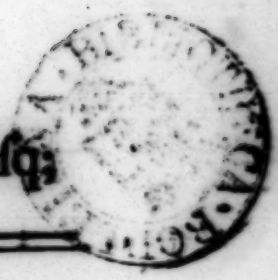
THE LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED.

BY

EDWARD SEARCH, Esq;



VOLUME . PART III.

Lights of NATURE and GOSPEL blended.

The Chriſtian Religion is, in all its Parts, adapted to the preſent Nature and Circumſtances of Mankind; and it is not poſſible to ſee the Reaſonableneſs and Beauty of the Goſpel, without conſidering the Condition and Quality of thoſe for whoſe Uſe and Benefit it is deſigned.

Bp Sherlock, Vol. IV. p. 100.

The Poſthumous WORK of
ABRAHAM TUCKER, ESQ.
Publiſhed from his Manuſcript as intended for the Preſs by the AUTHOR.

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M DCC LXXVII

THE LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED.

VOL. V. PART III.

CHAP. XIX.

Divine Oeconomy.

HAVING found, both from Religion and Philoſophy, that univerſal Charity towards God and his creatures is the grand Cardinal virtue, the hinge whereon all the others turn, the end wherein they ought to terminate; let us endeavour to trace out ſome footſteps of the divine oeconomy in the adminiſtration of this world: wherein it may appear by what gradual approaches God has been pleaſed to lead mankind towards a ſound underſtanding of himſelf, and an openneſs of heart to one another. And this will oblige us to rehandle a ſubject we have already taken into conſideration before: for Providence I muſt own,

is a favourite topic with me, and I am fond of ſetting it in every various light that may help to make it more clearly and more generally underſtood.

In my XXVth Chapter of the ſecond Volume bearing that title, I have taken pains to ſhow that all events without exception, ſmall as well as great, muſt take riſe from their adequate cauſes, provided in certain knowledge and purpoſe of every particular effect they ſhould bring forth. This being an eſoteric doctrine, inconvenient and unfit for common uſe, which requires a diſtinction to be made between things providential, and others that are not, I have appropriated the VIth Chapter of this Volume to mark out that diſtinction, and render the wiſdom and contrivance running throughout the works of nature apparent to common apprehenſions. But here ſtill remains another field of enquiry, into the ſcheme of polity governing mankind, and meaſures of conduct reſpecting the moral world: wherein we may take our ideas directly from experience, without making other uſe of ſpeculation than to direct and model our obſervations into a regular plan. This may be called not ſo much a theory as a hiſtory of Providence: of which I purpoſe in this Chapter to attempt an imperfect ſketch. I ſay ſketch, for a compleat hiſtory would require uncommon abilities, an extenſive knowledge of the world in all ages

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and countries, and a piercing ſagacity to follow the lines of Wiſdom throughout all their intricate windings.

But it is the cuſtom of Providence to perfect mighty works by a multitude of weak and unpromiſing inſtruments, each performing a ſmall and ſeveral part of the whole: for we are none of us wholly inſignificant when doing our beſt, becauſe that beſt is always the whole of our ſhare towards compleating the great deſign. Therefore I may ſafely preſume that my talents are ſufficient for the ſphere I am to act in: it is my buſineſs to fill up the ſphere, that there may be no vacancies left through my negligence: and if I can make my drawings viſible, with ſomething of a ſhape, connection and ſymmetry in them, ſhall think I have done great matters. Perhaps the coarſe draught may ſtimulate and furniſh hints to ſome abler maſter to produce a fuller, more ſtriking likeneſs of the glorious original, which may gain the admiration of every body, and do more extenſive ſervice than I am capable of. In theſe hopes I ſhall enter upon my undertaking without diffidence, as liable to no hazard of a diſappointment becauſe having no expectations, and being aſſured that the diſpoſer of gifts has enabled every man to do as much as was wanted from him on every preſent occaſion.

2. When we reflect on the boundleſs extent of Omnipotence, having all ſubſtances at com-

mand and all manners of effecting them, there is no doubt that God might have diſtributed what portion and kinds of happineſs he thought proper to his creatures, without making any preparation of ſubjects or materials to bring them ſuitable to one another: nor that he might have excited ſenſations, ideas and intelligence, either permanent, unfading and unſatiating, or in continually varying ſucceſſions, by his own immediate act, without employing any material or other channel to convey them. But experience of all around us teſtifies, that he has choſen to work his purpoſes by the contrivances of wiſdom rather than the operations of power.

He could have rained us food from heaven, ready fitted for our palate and digeſtion: but he has given fertility to the earth, ſkill and induſtry to man to draw from thence by long toil and patience the corn and other proviſions for our ſuſtenance. He could have moulded the human frame at once from the duſt of the earth in full ſtature and maturity, with ſufficient knowledge to name all the beaſts of the field according to their reſpective natures: but he has caſt us into the world in helpleſs infancy, growing through many ſtages of imbecillity and ignorance up to perfect manhood. In like manner he could have fully peopled the earth, as eaſily as make an Adam, by a ſingle act of creation; inſpired into them arts and ſciences,

good

good polity, judgement, experience and ſound Religion, together with the breath of life: but we may learn from ancient records, that there has been an infancy of the world as well as of particular perſons, a gradual progreſs of knowledge human and divine; and though we have not yet ſeen it arrive to full maturity, we may diſcern it approaching ſlowly thereto, by the advancement of learning applied to uſeful purpoſes, the daily decreaſe of ſavageneſs, barbariſm and ſuperſtition, the ſpreading intercourſe among nations familiarizing them with one another, and the growing ſinews of commerce tending to knit the whole into one body, and compleat the perfect manhood of a paradiſiacal ſtate.

3. We were born into the world ſelfiſh and ſenſitive, having no regard for any other creatures, nor for any thing beyond the preſent calls of appetite: and if we had been planted like trees always to grow each in his ſeveral ſpot, receiving our nouriſhment from the ground beneath us, our pleaſures and pains continually from the Sun, the air, the rains and the dews, we ſhould never have had a thought reaching further than ourſelves, or than the preſent moment. But God has been pleaſed to endue us with remembrance and obſervation to diſcern the influence of the paſt upon the preſent, and the preſent upon the future; which leads us gradually into a degree of forecaſt, prudence

and reaſon. He has likewiſe given us the powers of motion and organs of ſpeech, by which we may have intercourſe among one another; and has ſown the ſeeds of wants and deſires, whereby we are drawn to become mutually helpful for ſupplying the one and gratifying the other. This firſt opens the heart a little beyond itſelf and begins our concern for others, generating love, inſtinct and friendſhip: for I have ſhown, in the Chapter on the Paſſions, that thoſe affections are the products of wiſdom, not the gifts of power, being no more born with us than ſpeech; but our organs are ſo conſtituted and ſuited to receive the action of external objects as to lead us naturally into them, without any more need of pains and cultivation than to haſten their growth.

He has given us moreover the faculty of Imagination, which when ſtored with variety of aſſociations and trains, can furniſh an entertainment of its own from objects that do not touch the ſenſitive appetites; and as we grow up, can find employment for more of our time than they do: for hunger and thirſt and the pleaſures of ſenſation engage us only now and then, but habit, fancy, amuſement, curioſity, novelty, and other movements of Imagination, occupy the moſt of our hours. This renders us ſociable, and makes us taſte an immediate pleaſure in company, where we do not expect aſ-

ſiſtance in our wants and deſires: for the trains of thought in other perſons bearing a ſimilitude with our own, their converſation and motions attract us by ſympathy, and lead our imagination more eaſily and in greater variety of windings than the ſcenes of inanimate objects around us can do. Were a child to be kept always alone from its birth, it would never want company, becauſe having never experienced the pleaſures of it: but if one of us was ſhut up by himſelf for a while, he would grow melancholy and dull, his ſpirits languid, and his thoughts ſtagnating; and if he could only ſee a number of people from his window, among whom there appeared ſomething of buſineſs and buſtle going forward, it would give a lift to his ſpirits and briſkneſs to his ideas. Therefore we are not born ſociable creatures, nor have an innate propenſity to converſe of any kind; but are placed in ſuch circumſtances by nature, and endued with ſuch capacities as will lead us into it inſenſibly.

4. But Imagination is more ſtrongly affected with ſcenes expreſſive of paſſion and emotion, than thoſe that are calm and placid: this I take it is what makes boys generally unlucky, and thoſe of the ſprightlieſt temper are commonly fulleſt of miſchief: becauſe being unable to bear the ſight of every thing languid around them, they can raiſe more ſtir by vexing than by doing ſervice. Therefore their miſchief is not malice,

lice, but fondneſs for ſomething that may engage their attention; for when they firſt meet together they are pleaſed with one anothers company, but not having learned the art of keeping up their pleaſures of converſation, they begin to play unlucky tricks with each other meerly for want of better employment: and for the like reaſon they throw ſtones at people, becauſe they can put them thereby into a greater flutter than by any thing elſe they could do. Or if they have not an opportunity of ſeeing the vexation occaſioned by the pranks they play, ſtill they can enjoy the thought of it; and will break a window ſlily, hide a workman's tool, or faſten up his door, for ſake of the fancy of how much he will fret and fume when he comes to diſcover the roguery. Nor are our vulgar much better than overgrown boys in this particular; for if they can get into a fine garden, it is fun to them to break off an ornament, or disfigure a ſtatue, or make any ſpoil they think will give much diſturbance; and they find a ſupreme delight in teazing an ideot, a deformed perſon, or a foreigner that has the ill luck to fall in their way.

But it is not the engagingneſs of miſchief alone that makes us hurtful to one another; our very wants and deſires, which firſt bring us together, have a tendency likewiſe to diſſociate us: for the ſame materials of gratification being wanted by ſeveral, and that ſelfiſhneſs which

which is our firſt principle of action prompting each to appropriate them to himſelf, this gives riſe to competitions, contentions, jealouſies, and averſions. The moſt obvious advantage we can take of another is by getting ſomething away from him, and the method occurring readieſt to make the ſight of him entertaining is by doing him a diſpleaſure: for it requires ſome acquaintance with the taſtes and character and diſpoſition, to know how we can oblige a man, or wherein we can have the benefit of his aſſiſtance or pleaſures of his converſation, but one may take away or ſnatch up what lies between us, or do hurt to any body one never ſaw before.

And having reaſon to expect the ſame firſt motions in others we have been conſcious of in ourſelves, it gives us an unfavourable opinion of new faces: beſides, while it is uncertain whether they ſtand well or ill diſpoſed towards us, prudence will direct to guard againſt the latter in the firſt place, and keep us upon our ſelf-defence until we know ſomething more particularly of them. Therefore children are ſhy and fearful among ſtrangers, and the vulgar come among them with either a dread or a defiance, according as they think themſelves ſtout enough to make their party good: nor do men wear off theſe ſentiments until by converſe in the world they learn to know diſpoſitions by looks and appearances, and become well verſed in the methods

chods of civility proper for removing all ſuſpicions of themſelves, and ingratiating with whatever company they fall into. But ſo long as fears and jealouſies ſubſiſt, it is natural to uſe the utmoſt efforts for driving off or diſabling the cauſes of them: therefore I imagine that if two companies of ſavages, utterly unknown to each other, ſhould happen to meet, they would fall a fighting: and we of the civilized countries have ſtill ſo much of the ſavage left in us, that we fall a cenſuring, ridiculing, obſerving blemiſhes, and picking holes in characters, manners and ſentiments. Nor perhaps are there many, who if they examine themſelves narrowly, might not find that they rarely come into company, unleſs of intimates, without a little ſpice of hoſtile diſpoſition and a ſpirit of defiance, though their good ſenſe and good breeding overpower and ſtifle it.

5. Theſe obſervations upon the turns that human nature takes ſpontaneouſly were, I ſuppoſe, the inducements with Hobbes to lay down, that men were born enemies to one another, and that it was nothing but neceſſity and weakneſs which drove them into ſociety to provide for their mutual defence: but it had become a philoſopher to have gone to the bottom of things, and not charge upon nature what does not appear in us until ſome time after we come out of her hands. Whoever obſerves little children may perceive them wholly wrapped up within

within themſelves, attentive only to preſent ſenſations of pleaſure and pain; ſo they are born with neither friendſhip nor enmity, but have the ſeeds ſown in them that will produce both: and if we muſt aſcribe the plants to nature becauſe ſhe furniſhes the ſoil and the ſeeds, we may with as much juſtice ſay they are born friends to the ſpecies, as enemies. For the pleaſures they receive from any thing naturally inclines them to affect the ſource from whence they flow, and the tendence of their parents or people about them, the entertainment found among their playfellows, and habitude with the reſt of the family, give them a concern for the perſons: ſo that they will cry upon ſeeing mamma, or nurſe, or brother, or ſiſter, or John or Molly in pain, without apprehenſion of any hurt to redound therefrom to themſelves. On the other hand, as the active powers encreaſe, and obſervation enlarges her field, they produce wantonneſs and greedineſs; which are meer ſelfiſh motions at firſt, but quickly beget ſuſpicion, ſtrangeneſs, variance and antipathy.

For Providence does not give us the motives of action immediately by the hand of nature, but lays the ſprings of them, and places us in ſuch ſituation as will call them ſeverally forth to operate, ſo as to produce that ſeries of events which was deſigned to paſs among free agents: for the benefits and pleaſures we daily receive from one another invite us to union and ſociety,

as our competitions and fears urge us to diſcord; which two powers by their oppoſite action, counterbalance and give motion to each other: for being wiſely mingled together in due proportion, they invigorate induſtry, whet contrivance, and furniſh out all the buſineſs of the world. Their effects have been remarked in ancient times, for we find by Heſiod, that Eros and Eris, that is, Love and Strife, were holden to be the two antagoniſt powers which produced order out of Chaos: but their province was carried farther than we have had occaſion to conſider it, being extended to the natural as well as the moral world; for attraction and repulſion were ſuppoſed to be the ſame among matter, as union and diſcord among mankind.

But Eros and Eris, though heretofore eſteemed firſt principles of motion, are not properties annexed by Omnipotence, but effects worked by the proviſions of Wiſdom. I have already ſhewn them not innate in the human mind, but growing from the appetites excited by pleaſure and pain: neither can they be inherent properties of matter, for nothing can act where it is not; therefore when bodies approach, or recede from others at a diſtance how ſmall ſoever, they muſt be driven to or from each other by external impulſe of ſomething touching or ſtriking upon them. So their action is the reſult of ſome other cauſe, of whoſe nature and manner of operation we know nothing, nor can ſcarce ſo much as conjecture; though we find it made to

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act in ſuch admirable contrivance, as to produce all that variety of regular motions we call the courſes of Nature.

Nevertheleſs there is this difference between inanimate and perceptive Beings with reſpect to the final end to be worked out by the principles actuating them; that Matter has no intereſt of its own, being incapable of receiving either good or evil, therefore whatever paſſes among it muſt be intended for the benefit of ſentient creatures. But were repulſion wholly to ceaſe, attraction being left without a competitor, muſt draw the whole material Univerſe into one ſolid lump, which could excite no variety of perceptions in any Spirit: as on the other hand, were repulſion to reign alone, it muſt break the whole into ſingle atoms and keep them perpetually ſtationed at equal diſtances from each other, where they could exhibit as little variety as in their former ſtate: in either caſe there would be a general quieſcence, a dreary uniformity, with no ſucceſſion of ideas, nor materials for ſcience and intelligence to work upon. Therefore we may preſume that Eros and Eris will for ever have a joint ſway over the material world throughout every part of it, and their forces be ſo wiſely adjuſted together, as to produce all the aſſortments, ſeparations and motions, neceſſary for the uſes of ſpiritual ſubſtance.

But with reſpect to the latter, which has an intereſt in what paſſes among it and is capable of

good

good and evil, the case is widely different: for Eris generates hurt and mischief, so that were it to prevail alone in the world, there would be nothing but havock, vexation and misery. Whereas Eros begets harmony, encrease of strength, mutual good offices and happiness; and when vigorous, will prove a sufficient spur to industry without aid of its antagonist: we find by experience that, in proportion as we can improve the influence of this power, things go on with us more currently and smoothly, our wants are better supplied, our accommodations better provided for, our pleasures multiplied, our troubles lessened, nor have we so much time hanging heavy upon our hands for want of employment. The blessed Spirits above, exalted to the perfection of their nature, live altogether under the influence of Eros, yet is their happiness compleat and uninterrupted; nor have we reason to suppose their activity ever lying unemployed, either in giving testimony of gratitude to their Creator, in carrying on his designs, or in works productive of benefit to their fellow-creatures.

Perhaps the troubles abounding among embodied Spirits, and the dreadful miseries among some of the inorganized, occasioned by the discordant power, may be a necessary Spectacle directing them what measures to pursue by warning them what to avoid: for we cannot well account for the permission of evil in this world,

and

and ſeverity of puniſhment conſequent upon it in the next; otherwiſe than by ſome ſignal benefit redounding therefrom to higher orders of Being: but the ſpectacle alone ſuffices for them, nor have they occaſion for any mixture of the malignant principle among themſelves. But among mankind as human nature at preſent ſtands circumſtanced, the joint action of both powers is requiſite: not that the benignant principle might not anſwer all our purpoſes compleatly, had we enough of it in our breaſts to overcome that averſeneſs to labour and indulgence of appetite which are perpetual clogs upon our activity; and ſtrength of mind enough to take effectual warning from miſchiefs at a diſtance, without their immediately touching ourſelves. But we being not ſo happily conſtituted, Eris is permitted to hold ſway among us, to ſupply our deficiency in the other principle whereto it was intended to conduct us: for the ſmart of its evil effects rouzes us up to a little conſideration, and dear-bought experience gradually encreaſes our value for that better influence whereby we might avoid them.

Thus Eros and Eris muſt perpetually work upon Matter as joint operators to produce all thoſe modifications and changes of form which conſtitute the health and beautify the face of Nature: but among ſpiritual ſubſtances the former is the ſole end had in view, and the latter only as a means employed to lead thereto through the ſtages of imperfection. For God

has thought proper not to put mankind at once in poſſeſſion of that harmony whereto they were created, but draws them into it inſenſibly by the workings of a contrary principle: and with a little careful obſervation upon the courſe of affairs upon earth, we may diſcern many of the ſteps by which diſcord helps us forward in our approaches towards union.

7. The continual ſupply of neceſſaries and conveniencies from parents, the engagement and ſolace they find in the care of their children, and pleaſures mutually received among playfellows, firſt cement us together, raiſe us a little out of ourſelves, and begin a family attachment: and though greedineſs and wantonneſs ſometimes a little diſturb the union, yet the viſible expedience of preſerving it unbroken, keeps them within bounds. But with reſpect to perſons between whom ſuch union has not been cemented, there is no apparent expedience to lay a reſtraint upon thoſe turbulent humours: ſo they are left to take their full ſcope, from whence injury, abuſe and continual ſuſpicion muſt enſue. And this fear of ſtrangers protects and encreaſes the attachment to intimates, for a man never enjoys his friends ſo heartily as after having been teazed or terrified among perſons he diſtaſtes, nor ever is ſo fond of home as when apprehenſive of danger abroad; nor perhaps could we keep our boys from continually running away, if they might expect the ſame kindneſs and tender uſage every where

where as they meet with from our hands. Thus to take a metaphor from Matter, the repellent quality of external bodies holds their internal parts together in a ſtronger coheſion.

But ſingle families cannot furniſh all the accommodations convenient for them within themſelves, nor find that variety of amuſements the human mind requires to prevent ſatiety from creeping upon it; they muſt ſoon perceive that one can ſupply what another wants, and one has hit upon methods of entertainment which are new and unthought of by the other: alliances, commerce and mutual intercourſe give them a liking to one another, and join them into cities or diſtricts; which become larger families wherein each individual has ſome concern for the reſt, becauſe contributing to his uſes or pleaſures; and the bands of union are extended to a wider compaſs. Yet rapaciouſneſs and wantonneſs ſtill continuing parts of the human character, the inhabitants of one diſtrict or city will be apt to invade the properties of another, who will naturally exert themſelves and ſet their wits to work to contrive methods of defence, or of retaliation upon the invaders: but finding themſelves too weak to effect a perfect ſecurity, both againſt open violence and ſecret fraud, or being tired of perpetual ſquabbles with their neighbours, they will try to ſtrike up an agreement with them, or to aſſociate themſelves with ſome other cities, which together may form a nation ſufficient in extent and

power to repel invaders, and preſerve domeſtic quiet.

Thus perhaps it may be true that men were firſt driven into large communities by fear and ſelf-defence, becauſe in a ſtate of nature they might not be ſenſible of any other benefits redounding from them: but having once taſted the ſweets of ſociety, they would not want other motives to hold them in it. For I may venture an appeal to the moſt ſelfiſh perſon among us, having any ſober conſideration of his own good, whether if he could be fully ſecured againſt all foreign invaſions or domeſtic robberies, thefts and injuries, he would yet be content to have a general anarchy prevail in the land, and would not regret the want of thoſe markets, public buildings, poſts, highways, and encouragements of arts, ſciences and manufactures, which are the effects of a national polity.

Nor is it any more than a Perhaps that nations were actually firſt formed ſolely by fear: they may have been families, deſcendants of one anceſtor, grown by numerous encreaſe into a people, or colonies tranſplanted from thence into an uninhabited country; and this opinion is countenanced by ancient hiſtory. Or if any of them were made up of perſons no ways related by nature; there were other means of collecting them together beſides the dread of danger: for we may gather from the fables of Orpheus and Amphion drawing ſtones and tygers and bears after them by the ſweetneſs of their

muſic

muſic, that it was not by terrors they drove the wild men diſperſed about the foreſts and mountains into ſociety, but lured them by the proſpect of advantages and pleaſures greater than they had experienced in their ſavage ſtate.

Nevertheleſs if fear and neceſſary ſelf-defence had a ſhare in the origin of ſtates, this will only confirm what I have advanced before concerning the method taken by Providence in uſing the miſchiefs of diſcord to bring men acquainted with the benefits of concord, and make their mutual attachment among one another more general. For whatever inducement firſt gathered them into nations, when once aſſociated therein they have a national intereſt, and ſome degree of regard for all their fellow-members: they take part in every national proſperity, ſtand up for the honour of the nation, and are ready to think a compatriot braver, ſtouter, more accompliſhed and more deſerving than any foreigner. How confident is our mob that one Engliſhman can beat two Frenchmen! How proud the French populace of living under an abſolute monarch, who has their all at his diſpoſal! and pity the poor unhappy Engliſhman for having a property of his own which the King cannot take away.

8. But the old leaven of wantonneſs and greedineſs, too deeply worked into human nature ever to be totally diſcharged again, ſpreads itſelf in families, cities, nations, or whatever other combinations men can be thrown into, and

gains a new form in large communities which it could not aſſume before, turning into luſt of fame and power. Hence proceed wars, encroachments, inroads, plunderings, conqueſt and tyranny: yet theſe evils were not utterly unproductive of their ſalutary fruits, conqueſt having often ended in uniting ſeveral nations under one empire. The four great monarchies, though not univerſal as they were called, overſpread a conſiderable part of the habitable earth: they muſt have produced great oppreſſion, diſtreſs and confuſion at firſt, till in a little time things fell into a ſettled courſe, and the inhabitants lived more quietly and happily than they had done in their former condition. For the conquerors and conquered incorporated by degrees into one people, having a communion of intereſts and continual intercourſe among them: whereby the bands of union, the ſinews of commerce, and links of ſociety, were ſtretched farther than they had ever been before. And even while wars and national animoſities ſubſiſt, they tend to cement the union of individuals with the community: therefore it is a common artifice of policy to give ill impreſſions of a foreign nation, to make the ſubjects join more heartily againſt a deteſted enemy.

At the beginning of the laſt war, the French charged us with robberies and piracies for making repriſals upon their ſhips: and we in return branded them with diſſimulation, treachery and

total diſregard of the moſt ſolemn treaties, ſo that French faith became the ſame among us as Punic faith had been among the Romans. While the war laſted, we all loved our king and one another prodigiouſly, but ſcarce were preliminaries ſigned before we fell a ſquabbling among ourſelves, for we are ſuch boys that we muſt be doing miſchief rather than nothing; if we cannot find employment in buſineſs, we muſt make it by wantonneſs; which takes delight to encourage revilings, calumnies, ſcandalous inſinuations, and ſometimes even indecencies againſt Majeſty itſelf, all for want of better employment; and prompts to conclude our entertainments with drinking healths not ſo much in honour to the toaſt as in vexation to one another: nor do I doubt but that if a fair computation could be made it would appear there has been more money thrown away within theſe few years upon ingenious Billingſgate in proſe and verſe, fit only to nouriſh the irritating humours, than has been laid out upon books of Religion, morality, or ſcience, which might mend the heart or improve the underſtanding. But we may preſume all theſe evils operate to ſome good, though what good, it might be difficult for mortal man to gueſs: perhaps we ſhould all doſe in indolence, or be eaten up with the ſpleen in this humid climate, if we had not ſomething to keep our bile in motion.

Nevertheleſs it muſt be owned upon the whole, that thoſe two qualities whereto I have aſcribed the riſe of the diſcordant paſſions, have been productive of ſignal advantages to mankind: for manufactures and commerce have been better improved, more arts invented, more accompliſhments attained, more public works as well military as civil achieved, more regularity, decency and civility produced, by the impulſe of covetouſneſs or luſt of fame, and that under-twig of it, vanity, than could be expected from what feeble ſentiment of prudence and public ſpirit we poſſeſs. Even war, robbery and wantonneſs have given occaſion to many inventions and exerciſes of induſtry that would have been needleſs without them: the danger of encroachments among neighbouring ſtates keeps them attentive to preſerve the balance of power, thereby creating a common intereſt, and introduce an alliance and harmony between nations that might otherwiſe have remained for ever ſtrangers; and the mutual jealouſies of parties awaken the vigilance of the people and render abuſes of power leſs practicable. Thus the wiſdom of Providence has mingled all varieties, both of the harmonizing and jarring paſſions, adjuſted to one another in ſuch admirable proportion as to form together a ſalutary compoſition, by which mankind has been gradually raiſed from their original ignorance and wildneſs to the degree of knowledge, diſcretion, mutual concern, and com-

communion of intereſts, we ſee them arrived at in this preſent age.

9. Yet this wonderful complication of counter-acting ſprings could not render the harmony compleat among ſpiritual ſubſtances without a knowledge of God: for it is the origin from one common Father, the preſidency of one Governor, that unites the whole Univerſe into one empire, and conſtitutes us citizens of the World; and that knowledge has proceeded ſlowly through many ſtages of error and imperfection. For God has been pleaſed to draw mankind in the approach towards him by ſteps that ſeemed to carry them directly from him, and lead them into juſt ideas of his Attributes through notions the moſt oppoſite to his character. A cordial hope and unreſerved truſt are the proper bands uniting the creature to the Creator, but theſe bands cannot well be twiſted up of fear; yet it is ſaid, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom, neceſſary to introduce that very Charity which when perfect will caſt it utterly away: and the fear of hobgoblings has ſometimes proved the ſecret avenue conducting into the fear of the Lord. For this firſt looſened the attachment to objects of ſenſe, and put the ſavage upon efforts of reflection concerning the things unſeen: which efforts, though faint and fruitleſs and perhaps hurtful in themſelves, yet opened the paſſage and cleared the way into the fields of reaſon and contemplation.

It

It ſeems reaſonable to imagine, that perſons who had gotten an awe over others, would endeavour to preſerve the influence of that awe when their backs were turned, and for that purpoſe might notch a ſtick into ſomething that could be fancied a human face, ſetting it up in a corner with pretence that it would inform them of whatever ſhould be done contrary to their orders in their abſence. Such ſtratagems as theſe require no great invention, our nurſes, the ſilleſt ſet of people among us, can hit upon the like: for they tell their children of an old man in the cupboard that will take them away when they are naughty, and if they play unlucky tricks ſlily, the little bird that peeps in at the window will tell of it.

Then if ſome perſon who had been greatly reverenced among them happened to die, the thought and the want of him would remain ſtrong for a while upon the minds of thoſe left behind: they would frequently dream of him, and thoſe dreams among a groſs and ſimple people would ſometimes be taken for real converſations. This would give an eaſy handle to ſuch as were more cunning than the reſt, to pretend an intercourſe with the departed, and by means of orders or advices feigned to have been received from them, to work their ends upon the others. In a little time they might improve upon their firſt inventions and find an account

account in enlarging the powers of the deceaſed, aſcribing to them the management of rains and winds and weather, of increaſe and ſterility in cattle, the fruits of the earth and herbs of the field, giving them an influence upon the courſes of fortune, the turn of events and ſucceſs of tranſactions among the living. And as ſome of theſe venerated names would be handed down to ſucceeding generations, among whom every thing relating to the perſons had been forgotten, this would naturally give a riſe to a diſtinction between the immortal Gods, of whoſe origin nobody could give an account, and Heroes or Demi-gods who had been remembered converſant upon earth: for the Theogony of Heſiod and other genealogies ſeem to have been additions of the Poets and Naturaliſts endeavouring to embelliſh or allegorize the popular opinions; as appears probable from the great variety of lineages deduced among them.

By theſe means the belief of Beings in the air, having an influence upon the courſes of things below, might be eſtabliſhed among an ignorant people, which though extremely groſs and imperfect were ſome benefit to them: for as it is better the child ſhould ſtand in awe of the old man in the cupboard, or the little bird at the window, than be under no check at all, ſo it is better men ſhould think Apollo or Pallas, a ſtick or a ſtatue, obſerves whether they do right

right or wrong, than have no reſtraint upon their actions whatever. Beſides, the benefit this notion was of to mankind in general is more to be conſidered than that it might do to the perſons entertaining it; and it was one ſtep, though a very ſmall one, in the progreſs of true Religion in the World. For the perſuaſion of an inviſible Power, obſervant of what paſſes among us, and having an influence upon the affairs of men, is the firſt article of a ſound and ſaving Faith; and how much ſoever the notions of ſuch power were confuſed, inconſiſtent and abſurd, ſtill the general opinion of its exiſtence was a point gained, which would make another ſtep in uſeful knowledge more eaſy to be taken: for an inſtructor will have leſs to do with one who already admits a ſuperior Being, of whatever kind or quality, than with one who is ſo totally immerſed in objects of ſenſe as to have no conception of any thing he does not ſee, or hear, or handle; becauſe in the latter he muſt inculcate the reality of ſuch Being before he can proceed to ſhow what it is, whereas he may lead the other by pointing out his inconſiſtencies into ſomething of a more regular and uniform ſyſtem.

10. At firſt we may preſume that men would have no farther concern, than for the preſervation, the accommodations and pleaſures of life;

life; but as they advanced in ſociety and fel into a more ſettled way of living, they would extend their thoughts beyond their own immediate wants, and begin to take an intereſt in the welfare of their children and deſcendants, after themſelves ſhould be no more. Their veneration likewiſe and the honour they ſaw paid to the memory of ſuch as had been eminent among them, would excite a wiſh to obtain the like for their own names: this muſt extend their concern beyond the preſent life, and make them deſirous of gaining an immortality by living for ever in the remembrance of thoſe who ſhould come after them. Add further that the workings of their own imagination or confident aſſertions of ſome who had an end to ſerve thereby, might perſuade them that ſome part of their own perſons would ſurvive after death, remaining capable of wants and gratifications, of enjoyment and ſuffering; and they might ſoon conclude that the proſperity of their children, the continuance of their names, and good or evil fortune of their ſurviving part, would depend upon their preſent conduct, and the favour of the immortal Gods or Heroes.

Here is now a ſecond ſtep gained in the progreſs towards true Religion: for beſides the belief of a ſuperintending Power, preſiding over the affairs of men, here is a concern for futurity, and a perſuaſion that our intereſt therein will

will ſtand affected by our management upon earth, and by our cares to engage the protection and eſcape the diſpleaſure of heaven: and thus we ſee how Providence may employ the mingled operations of fear, credulity, artifice and vanity, to work a general reception of two fundamental articles. Nevertheleſs it may be expected that thoſe articles in their infancy muſt lie overwhelmed among a multitude of groſs errors and abſurdities: for the paſſions of men, the examples of vice, folly and contention among the moſt admired, the intereſt of ſtates, the craft of private perſons, accidental impreſſions of fear and fantaſtic rovings of imagination, each adding ſomething of its own, muſt together make up a motly mixture.

And accordingly we find in all ancient hiſtory what a multitude of incoherencies and abſurdities abounded in the firſt received creeds, concerning the immortal Gods and Demi-gods, the wars, rebellions, quarrels, thefts, over-reachings, amours, infidelities and partialities among them, their inhabitancy in ſtatues made by men, their declarations by oracles, omens and prodigies; concerning the apparitions of ſhades and ſpectres, the enjoyments of Elyſium and puniſhments of Tartarus. Yet it being obvious that no community could ſubſiſt upon earth without ſomething of order and government, there was the-like notion of a ſubordination and aſſignment of particular provinces among the Gods.

Jove

Jove ruled the heavens, Neptune over the ſea, Pluto in the infernal regions; Minerva had the patronage of wiſdom, Apollo of wit; Mercury of cunning; Ceres preſided over eatables, and Bacchus over drinkables: but that they might not encroach upon one anothers provinces, as ſuch Gods ſubject to the worſt of human paſſions might be apt to do, Jove had a ſupreme authority over all.

Which laſt notion opened a narrow paſſage towards the unity of the Godhead, yet was even this little avenue choaked up with doubts and confuſion; for the Parcæ were holden ſometimes to controul the Will of Jove, ſometimes only to enforce his decrees by their ſpinning, and if he had once bound himſelf by Styx, he durſt not recede though he ſhould afterwards change his mind: ſo one cannot well tell whether Jove, though ſupreme over the Gods, had not another ſupreme power over him.

Such fluctuations and incoherencies in the popular doctrines ſet reflection at work, and gave birth to Philoſophy: for reaſon muſt have materials furniſhed it from elſewhere to begin upon, and Philoſophers as well as other men once were children, ſuſceptible of impreſſions ſtamped upon them by their teachers or worked into them by their companions; nor could their ſagacity, when mature enough to act for itſelf, do any more than examine the opinions they had

had imbibed, endeavouring to ſeparate the ſolid from the empty, and purſue ſuch farther lights as could be ſtricken out from what had ſtood the teſt. But the reaſon of one man can run very little lengths, for his life will be almoſt ſpent in getting rid of erroneous prejudices before he can begin to make an advance towards truth; and his diſcovery will require time to ſettle into ſomething of a current opinion, before it can ſerve as a foundation for another to proceed upon.

11. The earlieſt perſons of thought and careful reflection, ſuch I mean as were not actuated by ambition or avarice, ſeem to have been legiſlators and founders of ſtates; and the immortality they had in view, to have been that of perpetuating their names among poſterity with love and honour for the ſervices they had done. For having found beneficence, even to ſucceeding generations, had in general eſteem, and ſtriking to their moral ſenſe, they ſuppoſed it innate, the perfection of human nature, and nobleſt ſentiment upon which a reaſonable creature could act: and indeed they were right, though without knowing why, Providence thus leading them by the general eſtimation into the moſt extenſive Charity their ſituation was capable of, and the proſecution of their own trueſt intereſts. It were mere gueſs work to ſay what was their belief of the Gods and a future ſtate, for being perfectly ſatisfied with the principle whereon

whereon they proceeded, they might be too much taken up with that to think closely of any thing else, and studied only how to turn popular opinions to the best advantage of the communities under their care.

Next arose persons who were desirous of going to the bottom of things, and investigating the causes of all the phenomena observable around: these were the Philosophers who finding the Gods esteemed the Governors only, not makers of the World, interfering now and then occasionally to set things right when running amiss, and controuled in their measures by dread of Styx and distaffs of the Parcæ, concluded there were some general laws of Nature governing both Gods and men; so set themselves to study the primary properties and elementary principles of bodies, in order to frame hypotheses of the manner wherein all visible productions might be formed from thence. Thus the first Philosophers seem to have been merely Naturalists, employing only the Names of the Gods to allegorize the powers of Nature: for with them Jove was the Ether, Juno the air, Neptune water, Vulcan fire, Cybele the earth, Pluto subterraneous vapours and minerals, Minerva understanding, Apollo genius, Mercury craft, and so on. Or if they had any thing of the Theologian, and held the existence of intelligent Beings superior to man, they supposed them productions of the finer elements, as they

did the firſt men of the groſſer: for they made Jove, the Father of the Gods, the Son of Chronos or Time and Rhea or the Flood, that is, produced by the workings of mechanical cauſes in the efflux of rolling years.

But the ſtudy of nature, carefully and honeſtly purſued will at laſt conduct to its Author, but by gentle ſteps and in length of time: ſo that if we transfer our expreſſion from the eſſence of God to the knowledge of him, we may truly ſay, this was the offspring of Chronos. For when ſome cloſe-thinking man had diſcovered a cauſe of the viſible phenomena, he had done, leaving to his ſucceſſor to find out the cauſe of that cauſe, which perhaps he might find among the operations of matter: a third would puſh on his enquiries a little farther, till ſpeculation having run the utmoſt length of its line, and ſtill finding matter incapable of furniſhing a cauſe which was not the effect of ſome prior agency, recourſe muſt be had at laſt to an immaterial Being.

12. It is not eaſy to aſcertain the time when Philoſophy firſt roſe out of political ſcience and corporeal objects: we have heard great things of Hermes Triſmegiſtus, Orpheus, and other ſages of earlieſt antiquity, but the accounts of them are much too imperfect and uncertain to be depended upon. Cudworth will have it probable that Orpheus taught the doctrine of the Trinity, or three co-eternal Hypoſtaſes in one Subſtance;

Subſtance; but if we may take Cicero's word, Thales was the firſt who diſcovered an intelligent principle operating in the birth of Nature: for he held that all things were formed out of water, but that Mind or Intelligence was what threw the water into thoſe various cohefions, forms, and motions which we call the productions of Nature. One cannot certainly tell whether he made his Mind a diſtinct ſubſtance from the water, or only a quality reſiding, not in the ſingle drops, but in the whole maſs: for the ancients, as I have already taken notice in Chapter XIII. entertained a notion, that Quality had an exiſtence of its own diſtinct from that of the ſubject whereto it belonged, and inexiſting in it; which inexiſtence was in the compounds, not in the ſeveral component parts, for their is no beauty in the ſingle bricks, the mortar, the wood work, the glaſs panes of a houſe; the beauty reſides in the whole compoſition aptly put together.

It ſeems moſt likely he had this latter idea, and ſo was not a compleat Theiſt; becauſe we find the introduction of Theiſm, that is, the doctrine of an intelligent Agent, the Author of Nature and ſubſtantially diſtinct from the materials whereon he worked, claimed for Pythagoras in thoſe called the golden verſes; where he is alluded to as the perſon who firſt opened to Pſyche, or the Spirit impriſoned in human body, a knowledge of the unfathomable Te-

trachtys, the fountain of ever flowing Nature, that is, the ſacred name of four letters: by which Dacier ſays he meant Jehovah which it ſeems in Hebrew contains only four letters, but it might as well have been ΖΕΥΣ or ΘΕΟΣ. It is pity Pythagoras did not talk Engliſh, for the name God having no more than three letters, he would then have preached up the worſhip of the ſacred Triad, and Dacier might have been poſitive he had believed in the Trinity.

The epithet Ever-flowing applied to Nature, is expounded by his commentators to ſignify only, that it ſhall laſt for ever, not that it has already had courſe from all eternity; yet I muſt beg leave to be excuſed from placing any more implicit faith in the commentators upon the golden verſes, than in thoſe upon the Bible. For when we recollect the received tenet among Philoſophers, that whatever was generated in time muſt be corrupted in time, the future perpetuity of Nature will infer its prior eternity: nor is this inconſiſtent with its ſpringing from a fountain, for where the fountain is eternal, the ſtream may well have run for ever. Againſt their expoſition of the Oath we are exhorted to reverence, I have no objection; for this ſeems a proper term to expreſs the perfect freedom of the divine agency, becauſe nothing could compel or induce him to ſwear beſides his own voluntary choice; and immutability of the

divine

divine purpoſe, which for ever has and will preſerve the courſes of Nature, and the ſame order of ſucceſſion in her changes; ſo that the ſeveral parts may take new forms in continual rotation, but the Univerſe remain always the ſame.

Hierocles explains the three firſt lines as deſcribing three diſtinct orders of Being eſſentially and perpetually different, their conditions not interchangeable with thoſe of each other; which are the immortal Gods, the Heroes full of light, and the ſubterraneous Intelligences. Now though inſtead of Subterraneous he has uſed the epithet Terreſtrial, a tranſlation which the learned Dacier tells us the Greek word can never bear, it is agreed on all hands that by thoſe Intelligencies are to be underſtood the Souls of good men departed, which the ſame Dacier aſſures us were holden by the Pythagoreans to mount up into Ether and not to ſink underground.

But it is the ſureſt way to expound the text by the text, and if we turn to the end of the poem, we ſhall find it conclude with an exhortation to follow the precepts therein contained, becauſe whoever does ſo, will, upon getting rid of body, go into the pure Ether and become an immortal God, incorruptible, no longer ſubject to death. Beſides we learn from Virgil, who has never been charged with miſrepreſenting the Pythagorean doctrines, that there is an

activity and celeſtial origin belonging to thoſe ſeeds from whence grew the race of men, the cattle, all ſpecies of wild beaſts, and fiſh of the ſea: and in another paſſage, that the bees too poſſeſs a part of the divine Mind, and have imbibed the ethereal draughts, from whence men and animals drew their birth, and whereinto all ſhall be returned and reſolved again; ſo that there is no ſuch thing as death, but the living principles fly off into the upper heavens, and mingle among the ſtars.

All theſe things conſidered, one cannot imagine Pythagoras ſo inconſiſtent with himſelf as to hold three diſtinct unchangeable natures in the regions unſeen: we muſt ſuppoſe him recommending a veneration for them only in compliance with the received opinions, to which all Philoſophers, except our modern minute ones, have ever ſhown a decent reſpect: but teaching among his Adepts, that all created Spirit was homogeneous, eternal, but produced by the divine Will an eternity ago, and paſſing through various ſtages or forms of Being in rotation; ſo that from an immortal God it might become a bee, a dolphin, a ſheep, a lion, a man, or a hero full of light, according to the material organizations wherein it lay enveloped, and when diſſolved from all vital union with matter whatever, would return to pure Ether, and be an immortal God again.

Therefore

Therefore if I might offer my ſenſe of the three firſt verſes, I ſhould conſtrue or paraphraſe them as follows, In the firſt place worſhip the immortal Gods conformably to the ritual eſtabliſhed in your country, and at the ſame reſpect the immutable nature of things, receiving their ſtability from the eternal purpoſe of the Almighty, ſacred and inviolable as an Oath; in the next place pay due honours to the Heroes full of light: nor omit to celebrate the memory of illuſtrious perſons that have been laid underground, by ſuch feſtivals and commemorations as are cuſtomary. The meaning of theſe precepts I take to be, that we ſhould uſe our reaſon, drawn from the contemplation of Nature, jointly with popular Religion, correcting the errors of the one by the other, employing either where moſt proper to bring thoſe we have to deal with a ſtep nearer towards the knowledge of their Maker, and univerſal Charity to their fellow-creatures, in ſuch way as they can follow, and thereby ſteering clear between the bigot and the freethinker.

13. However this be, and whether Pythagoras were the diſcoverer, it can ſcarcely be denied that in his time there was the belief of a God in the proper ſenſe of the word as we now uſe it, an omnipotent, intelligent, unproduced Being, Author of Nature and all her works; for the gods we have ſpoken of before were nothing more than huge flying men, of enor-

mous ſtrength, and bodies ſo finely contexed as to render them inviſible, unleſs when they had a mind to ſhow themſelves by aſſuming a covering from the groſſer elements. There was likewiſe the opinion of a future ſtate of bliſs and immortality, equal, or I may ſay preferable to that of the Gods vulgarly worſhipped, whereto men might riſe by a ſteady rectitude of ſentiment and conduct, that is, by Faith and good Works.

Here were great and important advances maintained ever after in the true Church of Philoſophy, if I may ſo call it, for there have been grievous ſchiſms and hereſies there as well as in Religion; and the latter Academics were errant freethinkers, never having any opinion of their own, but combating every body's elſe: if you ſaid ſnow was white they would prove you miſtaken, if you ſaid it was black they would do as before, if you aſked them what they thought themſelves, they would anſwer they could not tell for it might be either. But I am ſcarce intitled to call it a Church, as conſiſting of Clergy alone without a congregation; for there never yet was a people of Philoſophers, nor ever could be, their Credenda being too refined and ſpeculative for vulgar comprehenſion: neither had they authority enough to introduce a form of words ſerviceable for general uſe, which each perſon might underſtand in a groſſer or more refined ſenſe according

cording to his reſpective capacity, yet conveying as compleat a ſyſtem as his underſtanding can contain.

Nor yet were their tenets either compleat or fully eſtabliſhed even in the cloſets of the ſtudious: for Tully, in his Tuſculan diſputation upon death, argued in the diſjunctive, either that death put an utter end to us, or was the paſſage into a more perfect ſtate; urging that in the former caſe it is a perpetual quiet ſleep without uneaſy dreams, and upon that ſcore we have no reaſon to be afraid of it; which argument might have been ſpared if he had not thought the other branch of the diſjunctive doubtful. And in other places where he exhorts to the performance of noble actions, he ſpeaks as much of an immortality by an honourable remembrance among poſterity, as by any other way.

They do not appear to have had any thought of Creation, but believed God the Maker, not the Firſt Cauſe or Creator of all things: Thales aſſigned him water to make a world with, Anaximenes fire, Anaxagoras a multitude of diverſly ſhaped corpuſcules ſimilar to the viſible bodies compoſed of them; Plato ſeems to have had a notion of Subſtance in the abſtract, which he calls Hyle, devoid of all form or quality whatever, until God was pleaſed to impreſs them upon it from archetypes in his own mind, and then it became a variety of bodies

bodies having ſpecific differences, but was naked Subſtance before ever he took it in hand. To go as low as Seneca, who was perhaps the beſt Philoſopher of his time, we find him ſtarting a doubt whether God made his own materials, or only worked up ſuch as he found already in being; by which queſtion may be meant no more than whether the elements had an inherent ſpecific difference of their own, or were all compounded of the ſame Materia prima variouſly put together, and ſo it does not touch the point of creation at all. However, Seneca himſelf declares poſitively for the pre-exiſtence of the materials, reſerving the workmanſhip alone for the Province of Omnipotence, and pretends to account for the exiſtence of moral evil this way: for, ſays he, God is good, willing to have made good men of us all, and has worked up the fineſt of his materials into ſuch as far as they would go, but the reſt of the elements were ſo untoward and croſs-grained that it was impoſſible to make better creatures of them than has been done.

They had not, or at leaſt did not take care to inculcate a ſufficiently large idea of Providence comprehending the turns of events, reſpecting ſingle perſons as well as the great and general laws of Nature: for we find in Tully's Nature of the Gods, that the Stoics, the moſt orthodox Philoſophers of thoſe days and ſtrenuous aſſerters of Providence, held that God takes care

care of great things, but overlooks the ſmall; and though they deſcended to the verieſt trifles in matters of dreams, omens, prodigies and phrenetic predictions, they aſcribed thoſe to an unaccountable ſympathy in nature between certain things, not to declarations of the divine Will.

The dependence of free agency upon prior cauſes, and the foundations of Juſtice, were not clearly underſtood, nor could they comprehend how God might give us both to will and to do, without deſtroying the expectation of reward for well doing: ſo they ſuppoſed virtue an original acquiſition of the mind by ſelf-exerted efforts, without any thing exterior prompting or directing her thereto. Agreeably to which notion we ſee Horace praying, Give me competence of fortune, give me talents; as for perſeverance in the right uſe of them, I will procure that for myſelf: thus denying God more than half his glory, and the acknowledgement due for the beſt of his gifts. In conſequence of this opinion they conceived an intrinſic ſelf-worked difference in men, which made them too regardleſs or too deſpairing of the generality, calculating their ſyſtems for a few contemplative rightly diſpoſed perſons, not endeavouring to draw out from thence a form of doctrine that might be commonly intelligible, and univerſally ſerviceable; nor acting

acting in concert to recommend it, whereby they might have had more weight upon the vulgar.

They made no effectual advances towards propagating the doctrine of Equity and Equality, whereby God appears to be the common Father and equal Protector of all, neither arbitrary in his dealings nor partial in his favours, as a respecter of persons: that firmest basis of a general interest, strongest cement of mutual union, and cleareſt rational avenue to universal Charity.

Nor did they thoroughly enough consider the nature of man, treating their scholars as purely rational creatures, not sensitive-rational; scarce reflecting, that the bulk of mankind have most of the sensitive, and all men a considerable part of it, in their composition, and that the impulses of one faculty may be mistaken for judgements of the other: neither did they study the use of ceremonies, customs and methods, whereby habit and imagination may be brought insensibly to assist in the services of reason.

Yet I would not by any means undervalue the sages of antiquity, nor lessen the veneration due to them for the benefits redounding to us from their labours, whereby they were aiding as instruments in the hand of Providence, towards nursing up human reason to the degree of vigour and soundness we find it now possess.

Therefore

Therefore their merit might be no ways inferior to the beſt among us, nor might our Divines and Philoſophers, placed in their ſituation, have made a whit better advances: if we can now ſoar greater heights, it is not owing to our greater ſtrength of wing, but to the advantage afforded us of taking our riſe from higher ground.

14. One cannot well determine how far Philoſophy might have puſhed on her courſe by repeated efforts in ſucceſſive generations. Poſſiby one man's reaſon, ſtill digeſting and improving upon the diſcoveries of another, might at laſt have attained as much uſeful knowledge as the human underſtanding is capable of receiving: wherein would be contained a compleat Theology, a clear diſcernment of the true links uniting the Whole in a general intereſt, and a practicable ſyſtem of morality accommodated to the ſeveral uſes and capacities of all mankind: and means might have been found to render theſe things intelligible to every one ſo far as to anſwer all his occaſions, ſo that a ſound Faith, a well-grounded Hope, and an unreſerved Charity might become general, which muſt have reſtored a golden age, a paradiſaical ſtate.

But God judged proper not to wait the ſlow advances of human ſpeculation, he has been graciouſly pleaſed to haſten the progreſs by making proviſion of cauſes for ſeveral providential

dential events. The art of printing has contributed greatly to the advancement of learning; but this was not the diſcovery of any Philoſopher: the world was long ago acquainted with the method of ſtamping inſcriptions upon medals and ſeals, which one would think might have put ſome curious perſon upon contriving to ſtamp the pages of a book; yet was this never thought of until the appointed time written in the book of Heaven.

Glaſs was the invention of ſome manufacturer having no more in view than the raiſing a fortune by his new manufacture: but from hence we are ſupplied with microſcopes, teleſcopes and priſms, which let us into ſecrets of Nature unſuſpected before, open to us the immeaſureable grandeur of the Univerſe, and bring us acquainted with animals to whom a ſpoonful of vinegar ſerves for a habitable world; thereby raiſing our idea of the Author of Nature by diſplaying the magnificence and the wonders of his works. From hence likewiſe have proceeded gradually a more exact knowledge of the laws of attraction, the velocity of light, the exiſtence of Ether, and extreme rarity of bodies. Thus the unlearned has been made to lend a helping hand to the contemplative in the proſecution of his ſcience, and the man of this world inſtrumental in opening a larger field to our Theology.

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The magnetic power of the loadſtone was known two thouſand years ago, but remained an object of idle curioſity for many ages, until not long ſince, the uſes of the needle being hit upon, have opened a new world, given a readier acceſs to remoteſt regions of the old, and tended to familiarize the ſeveral nations upon earth.

Gunpowder is ſaid to have been the lucky diſcovery of a monk, trying experiments without expectation of any ſuch reſult: but how much has this changed the polity of nations and civilized the rugged manners of war? making it depend more upon ſcience than perſonal courage or bodily ſtrength, uniting the civil in one intereſt with the military, which muſt protect induſtry and commerce to draw ſupplies from thence for the expenſive preparations neceſſary; and ſpares a conquered country, to have its aſſiſtance in tranſporting the unwieldy machines, and becauſe more may be expected from contributions than from plunder.

We may term theſe inventions accidental, and ſo indeed they were with reſpect to us, for no man could have foreſeen the day beforehand, when they would happen: but accidents ariſe from certain cauſes lying in train to produce them when, and in what manner they ſhall come to paſs, and ſince thoſe have had a great

great influence upon the affairs of men, they are worthy our referring to the Diſpoſer of all events.

15. But the moſt evidently providental event, or rather train of events, and moſt quickening the progreſs of ſaving knowledge, was that of the Jewiſh diſpenſation. For accounts of this we muſt neceſſarily recur to the Old Teſtament, having nothing elſe that will carry us far enough back; for Homer, the oldeſt profane writer extant, is I think ſuppoſed cotemporary with Solomon, and the tranſactions he ſpeaks of to have paſſed in the time of Jephtha: if there were other authors at hand I ſhould think it prudent to give them a due conſideration, but ſince we have only Moſes, we muſt be content with the materials he has furniſhed us. Nor muſt I upon this occaſion regard him as an inſpired writer, for it may be remembered the part I have taken upon me is that of a reconciler between contending parties, ſo I muſt proceed upon grounds that may be admitted on both ſides: therefore I ſhall meddle with nothing ſupernatural, which might be objected againſt as incredible, but employ ſuch parts only of his narration as might have been received upon the credit of Livy, or any common hiſtorian. For the like reaſon I purpoſe to go no higher than Abraham, becauſe it is the humour of ſome among us to regard all that has

has been recorded of the earlier and antediluvian times, as fabulous.

And I think it could not be doubted, had we no better authority than that of Livy for the fact, that there was ſuch a perſon, eminent in his time and the founder of a family, whom he bred up in the belief of one God, ſupreme Governor of heaven and earth, and arbiter of the affairs of men; and preſerved them from the contagion of ſuperſtition and idolatry prevailing every where round about. I ſhall not pretend to decide what we are to think of the angels with whom he is ſaid to have been converſant, but we may gather thus much from the mention made of them, that he held there were intelligent creatures ſuperior to man, but ſubordinate to God, and never interfering in human affairs unleſs when commiſſioned thereto by ſpecial orders from above: this their very name implies, for Angel is the ſame as Meſſenger, which ſhews that they were known to men no otherwiſe than by the errands they were ſuppoſed to be ſent upon by their Maſter.

I am not concerned with the reality of thoſe Angels appearance, let him only have dreamt of them and taken his dreams for realities: how came it he did not dream they were independent powers, ſelf-exiſtent, or produced by ſome Fatality or plaſtic energy of Nature, and God only an Olympian Jove having a little more ſtrength and authority than his fellow Gods?

Or how happened it that no body in other countries ſhould ever dream of one ſupreme Power, Governor and Maker of all other Beings, before the times of Pythagoras, or ſuppoſe Thales who was but a little earlier, and both of them many centuries poſterior to Abraham? for he was no Philoſopher, he never pried into the ſecrets of nature, nor purſued the demonſtrations of mathematics, nor ſtudied the courſes of the heavenly bodies, nor dived into the depths of metaphyſics: but was a plain man, occupied in the management of his cattle, and providing accommodations for his houſehold; and his Theology was ſuch as was intelligible, not only to Adepts, but to his ſervants, his ſhepherds, and all under his influence.

Whence got he then this purity of ſentiment concerning the things unſeen, unmingled with any thing of the notched ſtick, the old man in the cupboard, or the quarrelling, intriguing, over-reaching immortal Gods, the deified Heroes, or ſubterraneous Intelligences? We dare not ſay he received it by tradition from Noah and Adam, nor by ſupernatural illumination; for fear of bringing a diſcredit upon our intellects as being too weak to throw off the prejudices of the nurſe and the ſchoolmaſter, which would never ſtand the teſt of all-deciding ridicule. What then ſhall we ſay? was it the remains of a rational ſyſtem ſtricken out by ſome Philoſophers who lived a thouſand years before him,

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but whoſe works and even remembrance have been clean ſwept away by inundation of barbarous nations? or was it an accidental diſcovery ſpringing originally from the notched ſtick by many gradations throtugh the channels of fear, credulity, vanity, cunning and policy among his predeceſſors.

We have not the leaſt hint of any ſuch primæval Sages or antepatriarchal Saracens, Goths and Vandals, even in fabulous hiſtory: ſo their very exiſtence is mere hypotheſis, trumped up to ſerve a turn. But admitting the ſuppoſition, unſupported as it is by any ſhadow of evidence, how chanced it that thoſe genuine remains were preſerved only in his family? Or if craft and credulity ſufficed to bear ſuch excellent fruits, why could they never produce the ſame in any other ſoil? If it were the growth of meer natural cauſes, yet Nature and all her movements, as well accidental as regular, were laid out at her birth in the plan of the Almighty: we muſt therefore acknowledge it a particular Providence, that in the formation of this ſublunary ſyſtem, he prepared natural cauſes to produce the ſeeds from whence in long proceſs of time ſhould ſpring a tree of ſound knowledge overſpreading the earth. It ſeems probable, and appears to have been fact if we may take Moſes's word, that the true God was known to Enoch, Melchiſedec, Noah, and others before Abraham, but they could not tranſmit it inviolate to

their deſcendants: he firſt prevailed to make it the received doctrine among all his houſehold, and entailed it as an unalienable eſtate upon his poſterity; from whence he became entitled to be called the father of the faithful.

16. I ſhall not touch upon the bleſſing given to Iſaac and Jacob, becauſe this would be building upon controverted ground, but ſuppoſe it will be admitted that this family grew into a numerous nation, ſtill poſſeſſed with the perſuaſion of one God omnipotent, Lord of heaven and earth, beſides whom there was none other God; which perſuaſion was peculiar to themſelves. For though moſt other nations had their patron God upon whoſe protection they depended, yet they allowed their neighbours to have tutelary Deities too, contending often and ſtruggling with their own: if they ſucceeded in an expedition they extolled their own God as the mightieſt, if beaten they would paſs over to the victorious God as the more potent; or at other times endeavour to keep upon good terms with both by taking the neighbouring Deity into a ſhare of their worſhip. This laſt notion crept in at frequent intervals among the Iſraelites, from the days of the golden calves down to the end of their monarchial government: nevertheleſs the worſhip of Jehovah ſtill continued the national Religion, and though ſometimes overwhelmed for a while was never wholly ſtifled, but always revived again in full vigour.

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At the captivity, when one might expect their diſtreſſed condition, by leſſening the opinion of their protector, ſhould have driven them into all the modes of their conquerors, as had happened to the ten tribes before them, on the contrary we find them riveted more ſtrongly in their primitive belief, ſo that idolatry and polytheiſm could never after find an entrance among them. It is not neceſſary for our preſent purpoſe that this ſhould have been effected by a ſupernatural interpoſition; admit it were compaſſed by the craft and management of their principal men who uſed this cement to keep their people united together, as knowing that if they ſuffered them to mingle amongſt others, they themſelves muſt loſe their influence and become perſons of no conſequence. But had not other enſlaved nations their principal men too, men of craft and management and ambition, as deſirous of keeping a populace firmly attached to their intereſts? Yet which of them could ever bring a people, who had been perpetually wavering in the object of their worſhip at home, to become ſo unalterably fixed in the midſt of ſtrangers as never to admit a mixture of foreign worſhip again?

What if we ſhould reject all the wonders of the burning Buſh, the Sun ſtanding ſtill, the exploits of Gideon and Sampſon, making them interpolations of Ezra as artifices to ſtrengthen the faith of his people: have not other writers

elſewhere interpolated, invented, and forged? Yet could never eſtabliſh a ſteady credit to paſs down inviolate to ſucceeding generations. What then occaſioned the difference? ſhall we ſay it was owing to chance or accidental circumſtances in the character and condition of the populace? Be it ſo: ſtill we know that chance and caſualty of circumſtance, the machinations and ſucceſſes of craft and policy, muſt proceed from their adequate cauſes, deriving in an unbroken chain from the ſprings firſt ſet at work by the Almighty in his formation of a world. Therefore when they concur to produce an event which will ſpread a beneficial influence upon all mankind in after ages, it falls properly within our deſcription of things ſignally providential.

17. Let us now proceed to another perſuaſion of this people, grafted upon that of their being the peculiar care of God; I mean their expectation of an extraordinary perſon to ariſe among them. They had before believed, that God had eſtabliſhed the houſe of David for ever, and that he would preſerve the throne in that family againſt all the power of neighbouring princes to over-turn it: but this hope proving abortive, they were then perſuaded, there ſhould ariſe one from his loins in due time who ſhould reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael; and this opinion they built upon certain types and prophecies recorded in their ancient writings. I have nothing to do with the ſignificancy

cancy of the types nor interpretation of the prophecies, the exact time when the Scepter may be truly ſaid to have departed from Judah, nor propriety of underſtanding a promiſe made for the comfort of a beſieged city, almoſt periſhing with famine, to relate to a child who ſhould be born of a virgin above five hundred years after. Let the application be as forced and fantaſtical as you pleaſe, ſtill they had their effect upon the imaginations of the people: and this is enough for my purpoſe.

'For unleſs you will ſay, that God was ignorant what effect they would produce, or to what uſes the prieſts and rulers would turn them, it muſt be allowed that he permitted the cauſes with a view to their conſequences: therefore may be ſaid to have ſpoken by them to the Jewiſh nation, in like manner as he ſpeaks to our reaſon by his works of nature. But when God ſpeaks, he will do it in a language to be underſtood by thoſe to whom it is addreſſed, and exciting the ideas proper for them to entertain: it is no matter whether we or others can rationally underſtand them in the ſame manner or no, we might as well cavil that the prophecies were delivered in Hebrew inſtead of Engliſh which we ſhould have underſtood better. Certain it is they did ſuffice to anſwer their purpoſe of keeping up an expectation among the Jews, who began to grow impatient, and did actually perſuade themſelves,

either upon ſolid or fancied grounds, that the Scepter was departed, and their Shiloh at hand, about the time when Jeſus entered upon his miniſtry.

Which national opinion was a neceſſary preparative for the introduction of his Goſpel, which was confined to the Jews during his life, and for ſome time after: for we may gather from the ſtory of Cornelius the Centurion that it had not been preached to any Gentile before, and muſt preſume that the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, making the three thouſand to whom Peter preached were Jews ſettled in thoſe countries. But the expectation of a Reſtorer would not ſuffice alone, for it ſeems there were ſeveral pretenders to the benefit of it: there wanted the deſignation of ſome particular perſon in whom that general expectance might centre, and this was effected by a compariſon of the prophecies with events, and by ſigns and wonders believed to have been worked by Jeſus, and thoſe delegated under him. I ſhall as before forbear to examine the accompliſhment of the prophecies, or evidence of the miracles: to enter upon theſe diſcuſſions would be carrying the ſhoemaker beyond his laſt, therefore ſhall leave them to Divines, who are better prepared for the work by a kind of learning I have not had time to make a proficiency in; nor do I find a want of it upon the preſent occaſion.

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For I desire no more to be granted me than what will scarce be disputed, that multitudes were drawn into a belief of the prophecies being accomplished, and the miracles really performed. Now whether this belief was worked by craft, prejudice, delusion and enthusiasm, or by rational conviction upon a full, fair and careful examination, all those springs of persuasion must be acknowledged to lie under the controul of Providence: therefore the event produced by them having since extended so wide over the earth, must be regarded as one of the main engines employed in the administration of the moral world. By great distance of time, and an almost total difference in our forms of expression and methods of logic from those of the Jews, the evidences once fresh and glaring are become obscured, so that it often requires a fund of science to clear up a point which a common man in the Apostolic days might have satisfied himself of by a little enquiry among his neighbours.

But for the generality there are the sacred records received upon the authority of the Church: for the plain man justly concludes that a number of persons, whom he knows to be men of learning and good manners, would not combine to persuade him into a veneration for what they had no good grounds to believe themselves, therefore relies upon their judgement in a matter he stands in no situation to

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judge of himſelf. And herein he acts as rationally as one who takes down the drugs preſcribed by a phyſician of whom he has a good opinion, though he underſtands nothing of their efficacy, nor can be certain upon his own knowledge whether they may not be poiſonous. And for ſuch as have ſome capacity to judge for themſelves, but thinking themſelves called to other exercifes of their induſtry, are no more at leiſure than I to rummage over all the wilds of controverſy, there is the internal evidence drawn from experience, and their own obſervation of the benefits accruing to mankind from the promulgation of the Goſpel. Nor can I help repeating what I have once declared before, that to me the external evidence ſeems to be in reality the deciding weight with moſt men: for in the few controverſial writings I have dipped into, I can perceive as much zeal and prejudice to the full in the freethinker as in the orthodox; both appear ſometimes to think too well, or too ill of the external evidences, according to their preconceived opinion of the cauſe.

18. Perhaps I ſhall be ſtopped ſhort here with a round aſſertion that the influence has neither been ſo ſalutary nor ſo extenſive as I ſeem to inſinuate; for that Chriſtians are not ſo good men as the Turks, the Chineſe, the Tartars, or the Iroquois, nor are they more than an inconſiderable number in compariſon with thoſe we term infidels; Gordon in his geogra-

geography computes more than half the countries upon earth to be Mahometan, and of the remainder the greater part are Heathen, and the leſſer Chriſtian. But we may claim Mahometiſm as a botchy excreſcenſe or ſpurious offspring of the Goſpel: the profeſſors of it preſerve a great veneration for Iſa or Jeſus, look upon him much in the ſame light as we do Elias, and pretend that their prophet was the Comforter of whom we have promiſe in the Goſpel; their Koran inculcates ſome of the moſt important truths contained therein, as I ſhall remark particularly by and by, and what there is good in it was borrowed from thence.

But I am under no neceſſity of ſettling the exact extent of the Goſpel influence, nor effect it has had upon the lives of thoſe who embrace it: let Chriſtendom be ſo ſmall a part of the globe as Gordon has made it, and the Turks, the Chineſe, the Tartars, the Iroquois, men of purer innocence and ſtricter probity than Chriſtians. Thoſe who think ſo are welcome to go live among them, provided they do not deſire me to go with them: yet I never heard of any body doing ſo merely for the ſake of better company, nor unleſs in ſome ſuch hopes as that of getting a Jaghire, which when obtained they bring home to ſpend among wicked Chriſtians. The diſcuſſion of thoſe points is needleſs to my preſent purpoſe, for I am not examining the ſources of temporal happineſs and convenience

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in the ſeveral countries upon earth, but obſerving the divine Oeconomy with reſpect to the race of men in general, and by what gradations the tree of ſound knowledge has been nouriſhed up towards maturity.

It ſeems a thing probable in itſelf, though we gave no heed to Moſes, that others before Abraham had believed the Unity, and abſolute Government of God, that he dealt with men according to their behaviour, and was good to all without exception who truſted in him: ſo here were the ſeeds of Faith and Hope and Charity ſown ſome how or other in ſingle perſons, or perhaps among a few intimates of ſimilar ſentiments and characters. But Abraham firſt made thoſe the tenets of a family, embraced by all the members of his numerous houſehold indifferently, the ſervants as well as the maſter and children, the groſs as well as the more diſcerning: ſo here was the beginning of a community united together in a general intereſt by the proper cement, a dependence upon one protector who had all things under command. In the infant ſimplicity of mankind it was neceſſary to keep this family as much as poſſible ſeparate from all others, that the coheſion of its parts might not be weakened by external attraction: from hence proceeded the great care taken to provide Iſaac and Jacob with orthodox wives, the expedience of which caution appears by the examples of Iſhmael and Eſau, who intermarrying

rying among the Canaanites became diſmembered from their parent plant, and engrafted upon Idolatry.

When the family grew into a nation, the general intereſt was extended to larger numbers, the heart of individuals opened wider, and their Charity diffuſed to all who were deſcendants from the ſame ſtock, ſubjects of the ſame law, and partakers in the ſame form of worſhip. Yet the groſſneſs of early times being not worn off, it was ſtill neceſſary to employ repulſion in the aſſiſtance of cohesion, and they were taught to exerciſe ſeverities upon their neighbours, to entertain an utter averſion and contempt of all other nations, as a means of uniting them more heartily with one another: for we have obſerved in a former part of this Chapter, there is nothing cements vulgar minds ſo ſtrongly as animoſity againſt a common enemy. By this averſion and contempt, together with the ceremonies inſtituted for keeping them in a compact body, they were preſerved in the belief of one God, incorporeal, ſupreme over all, and the idea of a general intereſt among the brethren conſequent upon the former, and were the only people in whom the like belief prevailed: for how largely ſoever we may attribute to Philoſophy with reſpect to the compleatneſs of its doctrines, there never yet was a people of Philoſophers, nor ever will be, unleſs it can be com-

compaſſed by means of the diſpenſation we are now ſpeaking of.

Whether they believed a future ſtate has been doubted, it is plain this was no part of their public creed, nor was any other immortality propounded to them than that of the proſperity and endurance of their nation: as they were a groſs and heavy-minded people, little apt to make advances beyond what was expreſsly taught them, it ſeems moſt probable the generality never thought ſo far as of another world, therefore could neither be ſaid to embrace nor reject it. But ſuch among them as were men of reflection could not well miſs of a concluſion ſo naturally following from the doctrine of one God, juſt and equitable, rewarder of every man according to his deeds, Lord of hoſts as well inviſible as viſible, Maker of heaven and earth, who breathed into man the breath of life; compared with the great inequality of fortunes among perſons of the ſame character here upon earth: and at laſt, after a long courſe of ages, the expectation of another life grew pretty current among them; for the Phariſees, who were more numerous than both the other ſects, believed a reſurrection.

By the coming of Jeſus the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, the partition-wall broken down, a paſſage opened for the Gentiles to become the people of God, the ceremonial law aboliſhed, righteouſneſs preached to the poor, and

and the reſurrection to eternal reward or puniſhment expreſsly taught as a popular doctrine. Therefore it may truly be ſaid, that life and immortality were brought to light through the Goſpel, notwithſtanding they might be known to a few perſons of thought and reflection for ſome ages before: for when a man has written a book and communicated it to two or three of his friends, we do not ſay it has ſeen the light, we never uſe that expreſſion until he has publiſhed it to the world; in like manner the perpetuity of the Soul, together with perſonal reward and puniſhment after death, may be ſaid to have been firſt brought to light by that which drew it from the cloſets of the ſtudious, and procured it to be received as an undoubted truth by the public.

And as the knowledge of God among the vulgar, ſo the bounds of Charity were likewiſe enlarged: for all of every nation who would, were admitted within the pale of ſalvation, which united them all in one general intereſt, and the communion of ſaints was made an article of Faith; ſo that the whole ſociety in heaven and earth became one entire body, actuated by the ſame ſpirit of concord under one Lord and one head. From the communion of intereſts naturally follows an equality of intrinſic value among the ſeveral members; ſo that he who brings a cobler into the way of ſalvation, does as good a deed as if he could bring a man

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of rank, learning, and accompliſhment: unleſs as the latter has more ability to do the ſame for others, and then the preference is due to him, not for his own ſake, but for the ſake of thoſe whom he may advantage. It muſt be owned there are ſome harſh expreſſions againſt the Scribes and Phariſees hypocrites, and ſuch like, but theſe were given for the hardneſs of our hearts, that is, for perſons in whom coheſion was ſtill ſo weak as to need aſſiſtance from repulſion: but for ſuch as have ears to hear, love to our neighbour is declared the ſecond great commandment, and our neighbour explained to be any perſon, orthodox, heretic, or infidel, who ſtands in a ſituation to receive a kindneſs at our hands.

19. Thus we ſee by what careful nurture the tree of ſound Theology has been raiſed among mankind; at firſt confined to narrow bounds that it might ſtrike ſtrong root into the ſpot where it grew, and as it gathered ſtrength to repel injuries from without, was made ſtill to ſhoot out new branches and extend the old ones over a wider compaſs of ground. And how the idea of a general intereſt was transferred from a few of ſimilar temper to a whole family, from thence to a populous nation, to the profeſſors of the ſame Faith, to all mankind; and perhaps at length may ſpread to the univerſal hoſt of perceptive Beings: yet did this tree grow too faſt for its ſtrength, ſo that at the extremities it

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generated into a groſs ſuperſtition, as bad as the idolatry it was intended to eradicate.

Then it was that God permitted Mahometiſm to grow from the corrupted roots like a fungus from rotten wood, and give that excreſcence a much larger courſe than ever the parent tree had reached to. Nor are we to think that hereby he undid his own work, but rather pruned it: for as we have remarked in the foregoing pages, that Heatheniſm makes one little advance in the progreſs towards true Religion among thoſe who were totally immerſed in ſenſible objects without ſuſpicion of any ſuperior power over them, ſo is Mahometiſm ſomething of an advance to heathens, and ſuch Chriſtians among whom their Religion had been ſo debaſed by mixtures of ſorcery, conjuration, and the groſſeſt image worſhip as to bring it down to the level of paganiſm. For wherever the ſtandard of Mahomet has prevailed, it has carried with it the belief of one God, incorporeal, inviſible, ſupreme Governor of heaven and earth, not to be bribed with oblations and ſacrifices, the ſure protector and rewarder of ſuch as ſerve him faithfully, the practice of many moral duties, the doctrine of future reward and puniſhment, and communion of intereſts among thoſe who join in the right way of worſhip. Theſe are important and fundamental articles, which perhaps could not have been other-

wiſe eſtabliſhed among ignorant or depraved people, incapable of receiving or retaining the doctrines of a better ſyſtem. Even the Chineſe with all the boaſted wiſdom of their Literati, were never able to make them popular tenets without its aſſiſtance. So that the diſpenſation we have traced down from the father of the faithful, has already, either in its purity or its corruption, had an influence, according to Gordon's reckoning, over three fourths of the globe.

You ſee how in tracing this clue I keep clear of all that wrangling and witticiſm wherewith the prophecies and miracles have been pelted by Freethinkers; for I may conſent that the prophecies ſhall have been judiciouſly and honeſtly, or enthuſiaſtically and craftily interpreted, the miracles genuine and real, or typical, allegorical and counterfeit, as you pleaſe; ſtill in either caſe the hiſtorical fact cannot be denied, that things have happened in the manner above related. But whatever has happened muſt have had certain adequate cauſes occaſioning it to fall out in that manner, and whatever cauſes have operated, muſt have lain in a train derived originally from the action of the Almighty, the diſpoſer of all events, as well among the courſes of Nature as the occurrencies befalling mankind: but the event we have been ſpeaking of is too important and beneficial for us to ſcruple aſſigning

ing it to the particular deſignation of his Providence. For all things muſt neceſſarily flow from the Firſt Cauſe by ſome channel or other, and if Divines could ſhew there were not natural cauſes in being ſufficient to produce the effects taken notice of above, this would at once eſtabliſh the credit of the ſupernatural.

20. But perhaps it will not be allowed, the Fungus can give nouriſhment to any body, becauſe it would be poiſonous to us who have been uſed to purer diet. And indeed it muſt be owned the few ſalubrious joices it has imbibed from the parent root, have been vitiated by many heterogeneous mixtures; ſuch as the duty of religious wars, the ſenſuality of future rewards, the allowableneſs of polygamy, concubinage, making mutes, contractions, and impurities I dare not defile my paper by naming: which though ſometimes practiſed among Chriſtians, were never yet eſteemed a part of their Religion, nor countenanced thereby. Therefore, to be liberal in our argument, let us give up the benefits of Mahometiſm, and confine ourſelves to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who though you reduce them to as narrow a compaſs as you can, will ſtill be found more numerous than the Jews, and to have ſeveral additional branches in their tree of knowledge which had not ſprouted forth among them.

For take the moſt illiterate perſon among us and he will tell you there is one God, eternal, almighty, ſpiritual, holy, infinitely wiſe and good, Creator as well as Maker and Governor of all things in heaven and earth; that tempeſts lay waſte, earthquakes overturn, lightnings ſtrike, diſeaſes deſtroy, fires conſume, accidents befal, where he commands, and forbear where he withholds; that his Providence is ever wakeful, not only over nations and kingdoms but over every particular perſon, ſo that no good or evil comes upon us without his knowledge and permiſſion or appointment; that he continually obſerves our actions, remarks our words, and ſees into our moſt ſecret thoughts; that what diſcretion and good diſpoſitions we have, and vigour of mind to act according to them, were owing to him as well as our powers and our knowledge, for he giveth us both to will and to do; nevertheleſs this does not deſtroy the juſtice of reward and puniſhment, wherefore it behoves us to be careful of our conduct, for that he will raiſe us up to immortality wherein our condition ſhall be affected by every deed and word and thought paſſing with us upon earth; that there is a communion of Saints, and fellowſhip between them and the Angels; that the Church militant and triumphant together compoſe one body under one head, having a connection of intereſts throughout the whole, that advancing the glory

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of God by doing good to his univerſal Church or any member thereof, according to our powers and opportunities, is our firſt duty and foundation of all the reſt; that whatever is done to the leaſt among our brethren, be it no more than giving a cup of cold water, will not paſs without its reward; that we owe a love to enemies and perſecutors, to ſtrangers, aliens and infidels, and ought to abſtain from all wanton cruelties and needleſs hurts even to brutes and inſects.

It will be aſked, Do Chriſtians regard all theſe things? I am afraid, but too little: yet are they parts of all their Creed, for the meaneſt among them will acknowledge their truth whenever put in mind of it, though the words coming in at one ear commonly paſs out again at the other the moment after their ſound is over. Well, but do not the Freethinkers hold the ſame articles too? That I cannot tell: I have heard ſome of them ſtickle mainly for the abſolute contingency of human action, the ſelf-ſufficiency of the Will to do good or evil, the intrinſic perſonal difference between man and man underived from any cauſe or antecedent proviſion of the Almighty, the limitations upon his power by the uncreated nature of things, his inability to make a bigot or a ſuperſtitious perſon happy. However, I hope they do hold moſt of the tenets before mentioned: but whence got they the knowledge of them? not

from diſcoveries made by their own ſagacity, I may venture to ſay: nor I believe from the remains of ancient philoſophy, for ſome of them are not to be found there. They were once under the nurſe and the ſchoolmaſter, who it is well known have been uſed to inculcate ſuch things, to whom therefore it may be preſumed the principles they retain of theirs were owing, notwithſtanding they affect to hold them in ſuch utter contempt.

21. Since then we ſee that God has been pleaſed, by an extraordinary ſeries of events continuing from the infancy of mankind, to nouriſh up a Religion whereby purer ſentiments of himſelf and a more extenſive Charity are introduced among the vulgar, than has ever been done any other way, why ſhould we ſcruple to avail ourſelves of the benefits to be drawn therefrom, as well as any thing we can gather from the contemplation of Nature? for both are his work, and both deſerve our various attention upon that account. The courſe of affairs reſpecting the moral world proceeds, equally with the courſes of Nature, from the Will and eternal purpoſe, the Word or Covenant of God, ſtiled in Pythagorean language the Oath of Jove; therefore we do not reverence the Oath while we continue to treat either branch of it lightly: and experience of former times may convince us, how expedient it is to em-

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ploy both for ſupporting and ſtrengthening one another.

Philoſophy has never been able, notwithſtanding many attempts by ſchools and lectures, by wiſe ſayings, fables and allegories, to ſpread her treaſures among the multitude, nor gain authority enough to make her tenets received. Neither could ſhe furniſh her Adepts with all the juſt ſentiments of God and principles urging to extenſive Charity which are to be found in a common Chriſtian, whoſe ſyſtem contains ſounder notions even of natural Religion, more profitable to the mind, than they were acquainted with; as may appear on comparing of §. 13, with the laſt ſection. Neither could ſhe prevent them, longer than from Pythagoras to the immediate ſcholars of Socrates, from debaſing her ſublimeſt ideas by intermixtures of many idle queſtions, concerning the exiſtence of ſpecies, forms and qualities, diſtinct from the ſubjects poſſeſſing them, the evidence of the ſenſes, the evil of pain, the ſummum bonum, the myſtic powers of certain numbers, divination, prodigies, auguries, oracles, and ſuch like.

On the other hand experience teſtifies what wild work has been made with Religion when once men begin to cry down the uſe of reaſon. Whenever headlong zeal and implicit faith gain the aſcendant, it becomes an engine of craft, ambition and ſpiritual tyranny, a bundle of

ſuperſtitions and groſs abſurdities; inſtead of peace and love and heart-felt ſolace it was intended to produce, it changes into a perpetual ſource of terror, cenſoriouſneſs, and ill humour, a fireband of war, animoſity and perſecution; it gives admiſſion to troops of witches, fairies, ſpectres, apparitions, dreams, prognoſtics, and the idleſt follies of paganiſm; its ſacred records are made to receive a myſtic interpretation according to the rules of the Cabbala, if that can be called an interpretation which renders them unintelligible or contradictory to common ſenſe; the few forms and ceremonies belonging to it, calculated upon the ſenſitivo-rational conſtitution of human nature, turned into a kind of magic operating by charm and conjuration, and this operation ſtrenuouſly contended for ſometimes by men of great learning and honeſt intentions. This being the caſe both of Religion and Philoſophy when eſteemed enemies to one another, diſcretion will incline us to endeavour a union and partnerſhip between them, that we may draw our advantages from both; taking hints from one for making improvements in the other, and employing the means furniſhed by one for giving currency to the other.

Nor can we offend againſt either by this manner of proceeding, for the Goſpel was preached to the poor, the ſentiments inculcated there were calculated for general uſe, many

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things delivered in parables to be heard only by him that hath ears to hear, inſtructions given, that were capable of various interpretations; as if on purpoſe to put us upon exerting our ſagacity and judgement in diſcovering their genuine ſenſe by help of our natural lights. Refined ſpeculations, profitable only for particular perſons not reckoned among the poor, are left to the inveſtigations of human reaſon, which we may preſume ſufficient for the taſk: therefore as there are no directions given for her aſſiſtance therein, ſo neither are there any prohibitions againſt taking her courſe. For though Saint Paul warns to beware of the vain babblings of Philoſophy, it does not follow from thence, that he would condemn all attention to Philoſophy whenever ſhe talks pertinently: for this would be making him as inconſiderate as the freethinker, who runs down Religion itſelf becauſe he has juſt reaſon to beware of the vain ſuperſtitions in Religion.

But Religion is not always ſuperſtitious, nor Philoſophy always a babbler, as we may gather from what the ſame Saint Paul tells us concerning the Gentiles, among whom I know of nothing better they had, than Philoſophy: for he ſays, God did not leave them without a witneſs of himſelf, for the inviſible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are ſeen by the creation, being made manifeſt in his works. And ſurely a ſcene wherein the

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eternal power and Godhead are displayed, is not unworthy the contemplation even of such as may have other displays of the same. For as we are told that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which cometh out of the mouth of God; so are we warranted to say upon experience of facts, that the spiritual life is not sustained by the written word alone, but in conjunction with that other word, proceeding from the same mouth, exhibited upon the face of nature in characters legible by human understanding.

22. Then if we regard the interest of Philosophy, and the interest of mankind, there is no cause to fear they should receive damage by joining Religion to co-operate with reason. The best policied and most flourishing states have been remarkable for their attachment to the forms of belief and modes of worship established among them, and in proportion as these lost their credit, they fell into confusion and decay. This we may learn from historians, particularly Polybius one of the most judicious and clearest from superstition among them, who attributes the then disjointed condition of the Greeks to their contempt for the sacredness of an oath: and Cicero, in his treatise upon the laws ascribes the vigour of the Roman commonwealth to their veneration for auguries, and other public or family ceremonies received from their ancestors. If we would take example

ample from the Philoſophers, we ſhall find that Pythagoras, Socrates, and others of the ſoundeſt, were no ridiculers of eſtabliſhed doctrines or forms of worſhip, but ſtrove to turn them to profitable uſes, and lead men by popular opinions into ſuch ſentiments of philoſophy as they were capable of receiving: and often endeavoured by Mythology to allegorize the Gods into the Powers of Nature, affections of the mind and moral virtues; of which we have given ſpecimens in Eros and Eris, the Thalaſſian and Uranian Venus.

How then do we imagine Pythagoras or Socrates would behave were they now to riſe up among us? would they undertake to prove Chriſtianity not myſterious, or as old as the Creation, or to undermine the grounds and reaſons of literal prophecy? would they perpetually affright men with the dangers of prieſtcraft, affect to ridicule every thing eſteemed ſacred, puzzle the ignorant with their archneſs or unſettle the minds of the vulgar with their witticiſms? Pythagoras you may think was a ſolemn old Don, and ſo might not care to deal in joking for want of a talent that way: for it is a favourite poſition with our moderns, that every man loves a joke even in argumentation, if he be able to make one; and they quote Elijah for a precedent, who joked upon the four hundred prieſts of Baal. Nevertheleſs Socrates was an exception to this rule, for you

you muſt allow him a man of as much wit and humour as ever lived; yet he knew how to be merry and wiſe, when to be witty and when to forbear, nor ever ſuffered his humour to outrun his diſcretion, but attended to the check of his Demon upon every preſent impulſe.

Therefore he never attempted to bring the prieſts or their oracles into contempt, to diſcredit the Eleuſinian myſteries, nor abuſe the Gods or their images. Neither did he ſtrive to unſettle any body in their notions, unleſs when ſtanding in the way of ſomething more ſolid he wanted to introduce: for he always had regard to the Cui bono, the conſequences to the party or the public, and aimed not ſo much to teach, as to put his ſcholar in a way how to find out for himſelf. So he was not poſitive nor dogmatical, nor fond of that expreſſion ſo much affected now a days by ſome folks, I will venture to ſay, for he never ventured to ſay any thing except one, which was, that he knew nothing, but only profeſſed to practiſe his mother's art of midwifry by delivering other perſons he ſaw labouring with thoughts that could not find an Iſſue: his method was to ſtart doubts and objections innumerable, not with deſign to leave things in uncertainty, but in order that by the workings of them in the mind, the hearer might be delivered of ſomething ſteady, certain, and ſalutary. How then

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can we better imitate him than by ſeeking a rational conſtruction of all the popular doctrines, which when found may juſtly be preſumed the genuine ſenſe intended to be conveyed by the teacher? for this is no more than every private man is intitled to, that his words ſhould be underſtood in the beſt ſenſe they are capable of bearing.

And we have the better encouragement to this method of proceeding, becauſe the materials we have to work upon are more eaſily ſuſceptible of a uſeful interpretation, than any vulgar opinions Socrates had to do with. How many excellent diſcourſes have we on morality, ſo interlarded with texts as to contain little elſe beſide the threads of connection joining them into a regular piece? but who could do the like with any ſyſtem of opinions current among the vulgar in Greece or Rome? who could make an inſtructive moral diſcourſe with quotations out of Ovid's Metamorphoſis, which I know not whether it may not be regarded as the Bible of Paganiſm? Perhaps ſome very good reflections might be picked up from thence here and there; but every part of our Bible has been made uſe of at ſometime or other, to enforce the moral duties and principles of natural Religion: even the marvellous parts have been ſerviceably applied that way, but what could you do with the marvellous in Ovid?

23. As to what there is of form and diſcipline, deference to authority, and peculiar articles of Faith diſtinct from thoſe of ſound Philoſophy, for they may be diſtinct without being oppoſite or hurtful thereto, it will become us to ſtudy carefully their ſeveral uſes and natural tendency, as a phyſician would his materia medica; and likewiſe the condition of human nature, and characters of our cotemporaries, as he does the conſtitution of his patient, in order to ſee to what ſervices they may be profitably applied, and what dangers of miſapplication are to be guarded againſt. If we perceive any turning them into unintelligible myſteries, or aſcribing to them an intrinſic value and efficacy, or conceiving them to operate in the way of magic, charm and conjuration, it would be a good deed to prevent it as there is opportunity; ſtill having a regard to what is feaſible as well as what is right in theory, and not perſiſting madly to kick againſt the pricks.

'But we muſt not be too rigorous in this point, for neither the illiterate nor learned vulgar can always trace the connection between cauſes and effects a little remote, nor diſcern the uſes and natural conſequences of things recommended upon good authority, yet they will imagine a reaſon where they ſee none; in which caſe they unavoidably mingle a ſpice of charm and conjuration in their ſyſtem: this it will be prudent to remove gently by ſuch management

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as they have calmneſs and capacity to bear. But we muſt not expect to remove it entirely, nor is it always neceſſary we ſhould; for there are ſome minds which cannot do without it, and to ſuch it will not be hurtful.

I have obſerved in a former place that ſuperſtition is relative, the ſame conceptions being innocent and profitable to one man, which would be ſuperſtitious in another: how groſs ſoever they be, yet if they are the pureſt he can entertain upon the ſubject, they are the propereſt for him. There are ſome rules and obſervances very uſeful for ſuch as cannot diſcern their uſes; the main point is to gain a reception of them, by pointing out their expedience where we can make it underſtood, where we cannot, by any other methods feaſible. Therefore the weakly pious or learned man, who perſuades himſelf that God has infuſed a magical virtue into certain ceremonies and compoſitions of matter, is leſs hurtful either to himſelf or to the public, than the freethinker, who ſhrewdly finding out there can be no intrinſic value in them, denies them any value at all, becauſe he has not calmneſs or ſagacity enough to trace out their expedience.

If I might be permitted to propoſe a medium, I would recommend that whatever we apprehend commanded by God, which we ſhould otherwiſe have thought uſeleſs and trifling ſhould be received in the ſame idea as we do the

the Recipes of a phyſician: we do not imagine him putting a virtue and efficacy into his drugs they had not before, but ſkilful to know their qualities, and diſcerning them to be proper for our conſtitution and preſent condition of body; ſo we take them down as the very things we ſhould have choſen for ourſelves, had we as much ſkill as he. In like manner I apprehend there is nothing irreligious in ſuppoſing that God never gives an arbitrary command which has not a prudential foundation in his conſtitutions of Nature and Providence, nor annexes a virtue and efficacy to things inſignificant; but that he knows perfectly the condition of his creatures, what opinions and practices will naturally conduce to our good, and graciouſly points them out to us where we could not have diſcovered them: therefore we are to reverence his Wiſdom without gainſaying, believing the things enjoined thereby are the very ſame we ſhould have choſen in prudence of our own accord, had we a full and accurate knowledge of the circumſtances we ſtand in, and how every thing would affect us.

And the like preſumption may juſtly prevail in a lower degree with reſpect to the inſtitutions eſtabliſhed by men, which may have a real uſe founded in human nature though it may not be readily explained to every ingenious well-bred gentleman, who demands it at a coffee-houſe.

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By taking things in this light, we ſhall eſcape an obſtinacy of zeal for old forms, and leave an opening for reformation when they appear manifeſtly to have an evil tendency: for then we may conclude the command has been miſinterpreted, or that it was occaſional and temporary, loſing its expedience and obligation upon a change in the characters of mankind, in which caſe it would be as abſurd to adhere to it inflexibly, as to continue the regimen preſcribed for a fever, when one afterwards falls into a dropſical or paralytic diſorder.

24. Some degree of attention to rule and diſcipline will do hurt to no man, for we have all more or leſs a mixture of the Angel and of the brute: therefore we muſt uſe ſome management with the brutal faculty, that it may ſtand ready to aſſiſt in the ſervices of reaſon, or even to do her work at intervals while ſhe lies aſleep. I have endeavoured in a former place to ſhow of how great importance it is to have a well diſciplined imagination, for that is the ſeat of the habits, the moral ſenſes and the virtues, which muſt impel ſpontaneouſly to action before they can be pronounced compleat: nor do the moſt ſalutary convictions of the underſtanding become a ſaving Faith, until they have made a lodgement there. But form and cuſtom and ceremony have a great effect upon the imagination to rivet perſuaſions and ſentiments,

and may be ſerviceably employed in rendering ſpeculation practical.

Men of ſtrong reaſon and much thought may have occaſion for leſs of them than others, yet do they not deſerve to be totally neglected even by ſuch, who may find their account in a judicious choice and application of them. However it muſt be owned that the bulk of mankind, partly by want of capacity, partly by continual engagement to their profeſſions and ways of life, are neceſſitated to take direction from the inferior faculty: if they uſe their reaſon, it is for making application of their rules and principles to particular caſes, but the rules and principles themſelves they muſt take from authority and cuſtom: they believe a thing becauſe they never heard it controverted, they follow a meaſure of conduct becauſe they find it practiſed by every body of character, having ſomething elſe to do than purſue the line of expedience up to the original ſource through all its long and intricate channels. Therefore if any man thinks he can manage well enough for himſelf without aid of authority or received cuſtoms, ſtill it is an unpardonable ſelfiſhneſs to take no thought for others around him.

But there is a narrowneſs of Soul too frequently prevailing as well among your great reaſoners as your very pious people, which makes them fond of contracting the pale of Salvation,

vation, and forward to entertain a contempt and utter neglect of all except a few choice ſpirits of their own turn. Whereas ſound Philoſophy and ſound Religion recommend a generous univerſally charitable temper as the moſt deſirable poſſeſſion and principal characteriſtic of their profeſſors, and teach that in the moſt ignorant deſpicable low-minded human creature there lies an immortal Soul capable of happineſs in another ſtate, equally with the beſt bred, the moſt accompliſhed or refined. Whoever therefore would approve himſelf a true Philoſopher, as well as he that deſires to be a truly religious man, ought to conſider his honeſt neighbours, though not ſpeculatiſts, and the vulgar, no leſs than himſelf; and contribute by his words and example to uphold the ſacredneſs of thoſe forms and principles which may be ſerviceable to them, though ſuch as he eſteems needleſs and unavailing for his own uſes.

Nevertheleſs if we could perſuade ourſelves it were allowable to regard the intereſts of Philoſophy alone, yet are they ſo liable to be affected by opinions of common currency, that it were prudent to take ſome care of the latter for ſake of the former: for no man ever ſtruck out his own ſyſtem from the beginning intirely by his own ſingle efforts, but took his riſe from ſome beaten ground already prepared for his uſe, therefore it is of the utmoſt conſequence what ground he has to take his riſe from.

The young Philoſopher, before he has the benefit of his own judgement, is equipped for his future progreſs by his parents, his tutors, and the company he happens to fall in amongſt: they lead him into acuteneſs of obſervation and ſound manner of judging upon ordinary things, the idea of an inviſible power, the regard to futurity, the laudableneſs of application with which he makes his ſubſequent diſcoveries: according to the principles they inſtill into him or the few ſuperſtitions, ſenſual taſtes and groſs conceptions they inculcate, he has the leſs to do afterwards either to engraft or to eradicate, and the clearer paſſage before him for making farther improvements.

Nor is it practicable to throw off all tincture of the nurſery, the ſchool, or the dining room; thoſe who think they have done it moſt effectually ſtill retain a ſpice; for it is from thence they annex the ideas of charm and magic to certain forms and ceremonies not joined therewith by the ableſt doctors of our Church; from thence they drew all they have poſitive in Religion, for their peculiar doctrines are barely negative, not to believe a miracle, not to admit a prophecy, not to mind a prieſt, not to ſubmit to any diſcipline. They are mighty aſſiduous in teaching men what they ſhould not do, but nothing of what they ſhould do, unleſs perhaps to deal with honour in your tranſactions, to be well-behaved, and to ſee with your

your own eyes; and thoſe I ſuppoſe the nurſe and the prieſt had bid them be careful of before: if they add any thing of their own, it is no more than an extenſion of the laſt rule, to ſee with your own eyes for diſcerning things let lie out of your ſight. Neither when we come from under tuition to act and think for ourſelves, can we totally eſcape the influence of ſympathy, but the ſentiments and imaginations of the company we conſort with will imperceptibly inſinuate among our own.

To theſe cauſes it muſt be owing that no great lengths of knowledge are ever run by any perſons in barbarous countries, but the greateſt proficiency has always been made in the moſt civilized and beſt principled nations; for there is no ſuch difference in ſoils and lineages as that one may produce ſcience but another not: we live in the ſame climate inhabited by the painted Britons, who when tranſported to Rome, were found fit only for hewers of wood and drawers of water; and are deſcended from them mingled with Saxons, Danes, Normans and Jutlanders, who knew no better Gods than Thor and Woden, nor other ſcience than war and deſtruction. Science began to ſhow a few ſigns of life upon the introduction of Chriſtianity among our anceſtors, obſcured as it was by Popiſh ſuperſtitions, which rendered it no light but rather darkneſs viſible; then the jargon of ſchool divinity and Ariſtotle miſunder-

ſtood occupied the thoughts of the ſtudious. As early as Edward III. there were perſons who ſaw through this veil of darkneſs, yet could they do little more than diſcover that it was a veil: but from the Reformation, learning of all kinds, both human and divine, has made a ſurprizing progreſs, and I hope it is ſtill gaining ground in the long journey towards perfection. In like manner if we were to ſearch all hiſtory, I imagine it would be found that the degree of purity in Religion and ſoundneſs in judgement among the ſpeculative has ever borne a proportion to that among the generality, both riſing and falling together becauſe mutually affecting one another.

25. This being the caſe it becomes a matter of moment to the moſt refined what qualified neighbours they have to live amongſt; which conſideration alone, if there were none more weighty, might incline us to wiſh them as juſt ſentiments in Religion and morality as they are capable, or willing to entertain: but theſe things can never be made to prevail generally without aid of forms, ceremonies, cuſtoms, and articles received upon authority.

After the freedoms I have uſed and pains I have taken throughout the foregoing work to view every thing in the light of nature, I cannot well be ſuſpected of a fondneſs for the magical, the marvellous and myſterious: I am rather

rather apprehenſive of having given offence by endeavouring to leſſen the myſteries of ſome points, which were thought to abound in them moſt copiouſly. And yet I declare that if I had the tuition of a porter, or even of an honeſt ſenſible fox-hunter diſpoſed to liſten to me attentively for ſeven years, I could not undertake to work in him the perſuaſions I think it highly expedient for him to entertain, upon the grounds whereon I build them for myſelf: therefore eſteem it very happy there is a code in credit, from which the ſentiments one would wiſh to infuſe, do ſo naturally follow.

What could have been done with the pagan Theology, or the Mahometan Koran? we muſt have worked hard with the tranſmuting proceſs, and allegorized them into a doctrine never thought of by the compilers: whereas now we need only clear away the perverſities and myſtic obſcurities that have overgrown in length of time, and develop the genuine ſenſe intended to be conveyed on the delivery, to produce a regular conſiſtent ſyſtem, agreeable to nature and reaſon.

The long and intricate deductions of ſcience, worked up with the ſlender threads of diſtinction, will never do for common uſe: the man of buſineſs has not time for ſuch piddling work, the poliſhed gentleman is above ſuch dry and muſty inveſtigations; ſo he muſt take ſomething upon truſt from thoſe plodding fellows

who have no better taſte than for toil and drudgery. It is neceſſary to ſhorten the line for his uſe by bringing the two ends together without troubling him with the whole length: in which caſe there is a great chance but he will annex ſome idea of charm or magic virtue, becauſe an efficacy ſeems to jump at once from the cauſe to a remote effect, wherewith it has no apparent nor immediate connection.

Nor is he ſingular in theſe imaginations, for one may obſerve the like in the profound and the ſpeculative: how currently do we talk of Nature and Chance, and think we clearly underſtand thoſe terms becauſe they are in every body's mouth? Some who would be thought the deepeſt reaſoners have made them Firſt Cauſes, and the ſoundeſt of very early Philoſophers, though they admitted a God, ſeem to have ſuppoſed him an offſpring of Nature, or at leaſt that the materials he had to work upon were of her property. But what is Chance conſidered as a firſt mover, or Nature as an original ſuſtainer of exiſtence? They are no ſubſtances, they are no Beings, they are powers without an agent, qualities without a ſubject: an idea as inexplicable to the full as any virtues ſuppoſed inherent in ſacred rites; why then ſhould we think one a more abſurd and ridiculous notion or more pernicious to be entertained than the other, ſo as to ſet ourſelves to eradicate it at all events?

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I would not take pains to perſuade any body that God has annexed an extraordinary virtue or efficacy to any form, ceremony, place, day, or aſſent to ſome ſpeculative propoſition, which he had not given them in his original conſtitution of Nature and plan of Providence reſpecting the moral world, for to inculcate ſuch perſuaſion would be dealing inſincerely: I would endeavour to ſtudy human nature, particularly the ſenſitive faculty, ſeat of the apprehenſions, habits and affections; obſerve carefully their remoteſt tendencies and influence upon one another, and what opinions or practices might be applied moſt for the benefit of mankind, as bringing them neareſt to a juſt ſentiment of God, a ſatisfaction of mind within themſelves, and a mutual Charity among one another. Whatever I judged moſt conducive to thoſe purpoſes, all circumſtances conſidered, I would recommend, or join in my vote with thoſe who had already recommended it; explaining my own idea by the chain of natural conſequences where I could, for I ſhould always wiſh to do as much by reaſon as poſſible, but where I found this impracticable, then having recourſe to authority or general eſtimation enforcing it as matter of duty, the due performance whereof will draw down the bleſſing of God. If any body of his own accord will annex the idea of a ſupernatural virtue or efficacy, I ſhould be cautious of contradicting him, while there was a

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hazard that he might thereby loſe the idea of any duty or adviſeableneſs at all: for I am for leaving every one to his own notions, unleſs upon a probability of exchanging them for better. To do otherwiſe, though too commonly practiſed, ſeems to me as inconſiderate, as if upon ſeeing your neighbour live in an ill-built incommodious houſe, you ſhould beat it about his ears without ſupplying him with materials, or furniſhing him a plan to build another.

26. Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, how God, by the proviſions of his Wiſdom, has raiſed up the two trees of knowledge, Philoſophy, and Religion, from little ſeeds by ſlow and ſucceſſive gradations, and how apt they are by their mutual influence to purify and meliorate each other: for when ſet at too great diſtance apart, Philoſophy becomes a vain babbler, and Religion a ſuperſtitious enchantreſs. Therefore it is highly expedient to approximate them as near as poſſible, that they may engraft into each other by approach: for their juices will mellow by mingling together, their branches grow more vigorous over a larger compaſs of ground, and bear ſalubrious fruits of more general uſe, as being ſuited for nouriſhment both of the ſenſitive and rational faculties.

And our Religion itſelf ſeems to point out this method; for it teaches that Man was created perfect, his rational faculties being ſufficient for his conduct, that the purpoſe of the Redemp-

Redemption was to reſtore him to the condition from whence he had fallen, that is, the perfect enjoyment of thoſe faculties: for I ſuppoſe it will not be denied that the bleſſed Saints above poſſeſs them as compleatly as Adam did, nor that they hold their happineſs by the tenure of their obedience. Redemption being the free Grace of God, there is no doubt he could have inſtated his elect in the full benefits purchaſed thereby immediately, but he has thought proper to lead them thereinto by a long preparation through the trials and temptations of this world: but what better preparation can they make, than by labouring to raiſe their rational faculties towards the perfection wherein they were given at the creation, and employing the means and methods preſcribed to bring the ſenſitive under entire command of the others.

During the patriarchal times the frequent converſe of Angels was vouchſafed, but no longer; in the courſe of the Levitical law interpretations of dreams, anſwers by Urim and Thummim, inſtructions by prophecy, and ſupernatural appearances gradually ceaſed; there being ſtill leſs and leſs need of application to the ſenſes in proportion as reaſon gathered ſtrength. Upon the particular occaſion of introducing the Goſpel it was neceſſary that miracles ſhould be revived, but the continuance of them after the Apoſtles ſeems a very doubtful fact: the multitude of ceremonies and ſacrifi-

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ces was then aboliſhed, inſtitutions and ordinances reduced to a very few, many things delivered in parables and dark ſayings requiring a careful application of the judgement to underſtand; nor was it expected they ſhould preſently work their full effect upon mankind, but promiſe was given of the Comforter who ſhould ſhew us all things.

This Comforter then we have among us: from his ſhewing we learn what things of God we know, and by his power are enabled to perform the good things we do. But in what manner does he come? not with ſigns and wonders, nor by viſible deſcent, nor yet in viſions, extaſies, ſudden illuminations, or preternatural feelings, for theſe are only the waking dreams of enthuſiaſts; but by working imperceptibly upon our mental organs at a time we know nothing of, perhaps hours or days or months anterior to any ſenſible effect: ſo the light he ſheds ſeems to us the diſcoveries of our own underſtanding, and the power he infuſes appears the exerted effort of our natural ſtrength; nor ſhould we know he had been aiding, otherwiſe than by the ſacred text aſſuring us that no good thing can be done without him. Therefore when our conſcience teſtifies that we have done a good thing, we may be confident of having had his aſſiſtance to invigorate our natural powers, but can never know nor perceive when the touch was given, by which they were ſo invigorated,

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Such then being his method of operation, it is our buſineſs to endeavour the beſt improvement of our underſtanding, and beſt uſe of our natural powers, truſting to God to afford us his ſupernatural aſſiſtance when and in what manner he judges proper: but making a judicious application of thoſe means and methods of grace ſuggeſted to us, and employing our reaſon to ſearch for lights in whatever quarter they may be found. For we have now ground to hope, that he will ſanctify our Philoſophy, provided we take care to reſtrain it from wandering in idle curioſities, but direct all its winding reſearches with an ultimate view to advancing that great work of God, the introduction of a ſound Faith, a well-grounded Hope, and a hearty univerſal Charity, among mankind. But we muſt not expect to perform great matters in a work which is to be the work of thouſands in ſucceſſive generations, each contributing a ſmall ſhare towards the whole; let us then be content to do our beſt, and we ſhall not prove deficient: if God had wanted more at our hands, he would have given us larger talents, or greater effuſions of his grace; but we are none of us uſeleſs in the ſpot where he has ſtationed us, every man may make ſome little addition to thoſe virtues, either among the publick, or the few he converſes with, or at leaſt in his own mind; and for what little he can do, may truſt

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Providence that it will operate its full proportion towards compleating the grand deſign.

27. For a grand deſign appears to have been carrying on from the earlieſt accounts of hiſtory, by a remarkable courſe of Providence, calculated for the benefit of the human race in general, diſtinct from that reſpecting particular perſons, and the intention of it to be for introducing a perfect rectitude of ſentiment, as well in the underſtanding as the inferior faculties, among mankind: for if this could be effected any where, it would make large ſtrides towards extending itſelf every where. We read that God in diſcourſe with Abraham declared, if he ſhould find ten righteous men in Sodom, he would ſpare the city for the ten righteous ſake: now the rationaliſt cannot conceive that the All-perfect ſhould act by favour and affection, ſo as to change the meaſures his Juſtice required of him, in conſideration of a few perſons who had made themſelves acceptable in his ſight; but that whatever it may be ſaid in popular language God will do, might be ſaid in philoſophic language he has actually done, for that there are natural cauſes already laid in train by the diſpoſition of his Providence for bringing it to paſs. Therefore he may underſtand by this text, that the exhortations, example and management of ten perfectly righteous perſons would have ſuch an influence upon the conduct of a wicked city, as to render them no objects of divine judgement;

ment; and ſo they would be ſpared, not by any change in the purpoſes of God, but by a change in their own characters.

Nor can we ſay, that experience contradicts this expoſition, for we never yet have had trial of the caſe: thoſe we call good men having always ſome mixture of error or frailty in their compoſition, and it is well known that one little infirmity will ſtop the good effects of many virtues. There never was heard of more than one perfect man upon earth, who was made ſo by union of the divine nature with the human, and his perfection went no farther than himſelf: for of his choſen diſciples one proved a traitor and reprobate, nor were the reſt without their miſapprehenſions and their failings. He preached only to the poor, and his doctrines were afterwards propagated in ſuch manner, as to ſeem fooliſhneſs to the wiſe of this world; neither were they ſo compleat as not to need the continual aſſiſtance of the Comforter for ſhewing thoſe things which could not be learned from them by human ſagacity. Yet we cannot ſuppoſe them ſo incompleat, as not fully to anſwer the purpoſe intended: from hence and from the event we may conclude, that God ſtill intended to carry on his work by the proviſions of Wiſdom rather than the operations of Power, and the purpoſe of this greateſt of all interpoſitions was not to introduce perfection into the world immediately, but only to ſow the Seeds of it,

which

which the working of natural cauſes, aſſiſted by occaſional waterings of the holy Spirit, might bring up in long proceſs of time to full maturity.

Therefore we muſt look to the courſes of Providence regulating the laws of nature, the actions of free agents and opportune ſucceſſion of fortuitous events, for eſtabliſhing the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Neither Religion nor Philoſophy can do it without taking aſſiſtance from common prudence and diſcretion in the ordinary tranſactions of life, without a thorough knowledge of human nature, of the characters and conceptions of men, whereby the meaſures of conduct for all ſituations and occaſions, tempers and capacities, may be regularly deduced from the one principle, the glory of God, or general intereſt of the creatures: for to make a kingdom perfect, the laws whereby it is governed muſt be ſuited to the condition of every member, and exigency of every occaſion. But we are too little acquainted either with ourſelves or one another, ever to lay out a plan of our whole conduct upon that one bottom, or even to frame a partial plan, that may be alike practicable and ſerviceable to others as to ourſelves: ſo that appetite, habit, and bodily wants are continually making work for themſelves, becauſe having none, or none that they can do, aſſigned them in our ſyſtem.

The Divine or pious Chriſtian may find enough in his oracles to conduct him ſafely in the

the way to his own ſalvation; the Philoſopher may think his ſcience ſufficient to lead him in the certain road to his future happineſs; but the one can never expect to attain an unfining obedience, nor the other to become a conſummate Wiſeman: the ſcheme of opinion and practice drawn by either, though perhaps the beſt that human infirmity can make it, for his own private uſe, might prove inconvenient and inexpedient for others; and will probably be too refined and mental for the man of buſineſs, the man of taſte, the merchant, the mechanic, and the labourer; for every man has ſomething peculiar in his notions, and his needs, which he will ſtrongly recommend as obligatory to his neighbour, and thereby ſpoil all the good effects he might have worked by his communicable ideas. For we are too haſty in taking up a perſuaſion that things are good in themſelves becauſe we have found benefit by them, without ever conſidering what they are good for, to whom they are good, and in what caſes they are applicable.

But we have a duty ariſing, as well from the relation we bear to the community, as to our Maker, and the things external from whence we receive our pleaſures and pains: therefore are not perfectly righteous until we become good neighbours as well as good men, nor is it enough to ſtrike out a compleat ſyſtem of ſentiment and action that ſhall comprehend, not only

our exercises of Religion and virtue, but likewise our common employments, our recreations and amusements, in such manner as to be practicable; until we have gotten the art of modelling it into various forms accommodated to the several uses of persons we converse with, respectively practicable by each of them, and yielding him as much benefit as in his circumstances he is capable of receiving. This art is so far from having ever yet been discovered, that no doubt it will appear a romantic imagination, like the Philosopher's stone; but it is not uncommon that things extremely difficult in the invention become as easy to be followed when the method is once hit upon.

There seems then to be no difficulty in apprehending, that ten righteous persons qualified as above, if ten such there shall ever be, may assimilate their whole city to themselves, from thence the likeness would spread by a quicker progress over the nation, from the nation to others in alliance therewith, and by their means throughout all mankind. Then it might be said that original sin was wiped away from the earth, and human nature restored to her primitive perfection wherein she came forth from the hands of her Maker; for while needing to be supported in what little good we do by obligatory institutions and supernatural aids, it is not human nature, but her assistant powers, that do the work: and from the dispensations of Providence,

dence, ordinary and extraordinary, taken notice of in the foregoing pages of this Chapter, may be gathered, that their tendency and ſcope is to raiſe human nature to its full perfection.

Whenever this ſhall happen compleat, then will be the Millennium, peopled entirely by Saints; which whether it ſhall begin in a year marked in our Calendar with a figure of ſix, or ſhall laſt preciſely one thouſand years, or whether there ſhall be any deaths therein, or thoſe which happen be looked upon as acceptable tranſlations to a higher ſtate, like the gentle paſſage through ſleep to morning vigor and freſhneſs, need not be enquired: if any body has a mind to make calculations, let him build upon the degree of purity in ſentiment and rectitude of conduct he can find any where, for this is more likely ground to go upon than any he can find in the Apocalypſe. Though by the way I cannot help wondering how any orthodox perſon can ſatisfy himſelf in preſuming to enter upon the diſcovery of an event whereof it is expreſsly declared, that no man knoweth the day, no not the Son, but the Father. In the mean time let us not ſpend ourſelves ſolely in unavailing prayers of, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, but take the ſpade into our hands and exert our abilities, be they no more than can remove a ſingle mole-hill, to plain the way for his paſſage. Nor yet need we expect him literally to deſcend in perſon, for he cannot be ſuppoſed fond of a

throne for the grandeur of it: and a monarch will not be wanted for ſuch ſubjects, diſpoſed to keep order among themſelves as members of one commonwealth, or rather one family, without private views or diſcordance of ſentiment, but united together in brotherly love and unabating Charity.

28. From the foregoing ſketch of the Divine Oeconomy may be gathered, that there is a general intereſt of the human ſpecies diſtinct from that of particulars; as in every country there is a national intereſt, diſtinct from that of the ſeveral members whereof the nation conſiſts. But the public intereſt ought always to carry the preference before private, therefore the moſt righteous governors do not ſcruple meaſures that lay a hardſhip upon particular perſons, if neceſſary for the public good: the ſubjects are preſſed into land and ſea ſervice, many fortunes are hazarded, many lives are ſacrificed, heavy taxes impoſed, to gain poſſeſſion of an uncultivated territory, from whoſe returns multitudes of thoſe who have borne the burden will never live to receive a compenſation. And all theſe things are laudable, as well in him that undertakes the ſervice, as in him that enjoins it, while done upon reaſonable proſpect of a real diſtant advantage to the nation: for every private man owes his life and fortune to the neceſſary demands of his country, and the advance-

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ment of a public benefit is the proper object of a good politician.

In like manner we find that in the perfect polity of Heaven, the general intereſt is regarded above all other conſiderations, and ſometimes purſued by the private damage of individuals. We are commanded to ſuffer perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake, to bear injuries patiently, to turn the left cheek to him that has ſmitten the right, to hate father and mother, wife and children, to part with lands and houſes, to lay down life itſelf, thus to break through natural affection and the natural love of ſelf-preſervation, for the Goſpel ſake. For Chriſt, who could have no intereſt of his own to ſerve, therefore to whom love could only be ſhewn by doing good to his univerſal Church, declares that whoever loveth not him above all things is not worthy of him.

Nor will heathen Philoſophy juſtify her votaries in purſuing their particular advantage before the general: Pythagoras and Socrates, perhaps the two greateſt apoſtles of human reaſon that ever lived, ſuffered martyrdom in her ſervice; their followers profeſſed the ſame doctrine; even thoſe of them who acted upon private views never durſt avow them: which ſhews that upon this ſubject Philoſophy has always ſpoken the ſame language with Religion. And our moral ſenſes prompt the like way, as appears by that applauſe, which riſes

ſpontaneouſly in every one's breaſt upon hearing the hiſtories of Regulus or Decius, or other ancient and modern heroes, who have generouſly ſacrificed their lives and fortunes to the public good. But if men were never to act againſt the impulſe of ſelfiſhneſs, ſtill they could not help being ſerviceable to others by the accidents befalling them: one man's misfortune may give warning to many to eſcape the danger; experience gained by obſervations upon his diſtemper, may point out a remedy for others; and while the enemy is buſied in ravaging a frontier, the interior parts may gain time to put themſelves in a poſture of defence.

The courſes of Providence appear calculated for the general advantage without regard to individuals, to whom they prove often unavailing and ſometimes detrimental: the ſtorms that purify the air and keep the ocean from ſtagnating, occaſion many wrecks by ſea, and devaſtations upon land; viciſſitudes of weather neceſſary to produce the fruits of the earth, tear in pieces many crazy conſtitutions; military, ſeafaring, and other occupations, without which our lives could not be preſerved in ſafety, nor the accommodations of them procured, ſubject thoſe who follow them to diſtreſſes, diſeaſes, dangers and frequent deſtructions; nor do we find entrance into the world without the pains and perils of thoſe who bore us: not a civilized nation upon earth whoſe conſtitution and polity

did

did not grow out of wars, conqueſts, tyrannies, confuſions, deſolations and miſeries among their anceſtors. Even Religion in its progreſs has given birth to groſs ſuperſtition, intolerable terrors and anxieties, to craft, oppreſſions and perſecutions: and Philoſophy tended to confound the underſtandings of men, turning them aſide from every thing uſeful, to follow vain curioſities, making them diſtruſt the evidence of their ſenſes, or driving them into downright Atheiſm. For many ages have thoſe two trees of knowledge been confined to narrow corners of the earth, where the far greater part of mankind never come within their ſhadow: and even to this day, there are many ſavages and children cut off in their infancy, who do not appear to have reaped benefit from either; nor do the beſt of us enjoy the full effect which may be expected from them, when grown to their deſtined perfection. From hence we conclude, the eye of Providence fixes attentively upon perfecting human nature, without looking upon any good or evil of particular perſons not lying in the line therewith.

29. Shall we then ſay with the Stoics, that God cares for great things but neglects the ſmall? that his Providence is over the human race; over empires or nations, but not over ſingle perſons? We do not ſay this of an earthly politician, if we believe him a righteous one; for we ſuppoſe he will conſult the benefit of a

few or of a ſingle man, where it can be done conſiſtently with the public good; and whenever he purſues the latter by damage to the former, he will wiſh to make him amends. Therefore there are honours and rewards for thoſe who have ſerved their country, reliefs for thoſe who have ſuffered in the ſervice; we have Chelſea and Greenwich hoſpitals for the ſick and maimed, penſions for the widows of ſuch as have been ſlain, and if it were neceſſary to pull down any man's houſe for repelling an invaſion, I do not doubt but the public would make up the loſs; for our legiſlature will not ſuffer a foot of ground to be taken away for widening a turnpike-road without an adequate compenſation in value to the owner.

But all ſervices are not repaid, nor all burdens and damages compenſated, for this is impracticable; therefore the politician ſtands fully excuſed by his inability: for if he had the power of reſtoring life and limb, and if the public revenues ſufficed to repay every farthing of all that had been called for in times of public exigency, it is to be preſumed he would ſuffer no man to remain a loſer who had in any manner contributed thereto. But with God there is no inability, for he has all creatures and their fortunes in all ſtages of Being at his diſpoſal: why then ſhould we doubt the righteous judge of Heaven and earth will do compleatly, what we conceive a righteous man would do ſo far

as

as lay in his power? Religion, no more than human reaſon, affords us the leaſt ground to doubt of it, for we are taught, He that loſeth his life for my ſake ſhall find it: but Religion being preached to the poor, muſt accommodate itſelf to the conceptions of the poor, therefore the recompence is repreſented as a voluntary reward to be conferred by a future act of God, who after a formal judgment of mankind, will ſay to the righteous, Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Whereas Philoſophy may ſuggeſt to him that hath ears to hear, that God being the Firſt Cauſe of all powers, motions and events, and having unlimited Omniſcience and infinite Wiſdom, may on forming a ſyſtem of Nature, lay out all the parts of it in ſuch diſpoſition as to bring forth every good and evil his Goodneſs and Equity require by an unerring train of conſequences, ſo as that a reward may certainly follow a hundred years hence from an act of God performed thouſands of years ago.

Nevertheleſs this is too large an idea for the illiterate or learned vulgar, who underſtand by Nature no more than the powers and properties of viſible bodies, animals, vegetables, minerals, foſſils, the action of the elements, the laws of gravitation, attraction and impulſe, and other objects of phyſiological ſcience; or at moſt include therein the tranſactions of men in their policy, their commerce, and mutual dealings

ings with one another. Now in ſuch a narrow view of Nature, as beheld by thoſe who can no more handle the Teleſcope than the Microſcope, it is impoſſible to conceive how natural cauſes can operate upon a man after diſſolution of his animal frame, when he ceaſes to be a phyſiological Being; but whatever paſſes with him in his next ſtate of exiſtence muſt be ſupernatural and miraculous. Therefore, as I have obſerved before in § 25, it is neceſſary for common uſe to ſhorten the line by bringing the two ends to meet, the act of God with the effect produced upon the creature; and repreſenting the reward as a new donation of bleſſings, for which there are no cauſes yet in being from whence they could enſue. Nor is this a prevarication or concealment of the truth, it is only the tranſlation of it into a language intelligible by the populace: for the belief that an ample reward lies in ſtore for every labour and ſuffering in a righteous cauſe, I take to be the fundamental article, which whoever holds, with a firm habitual perſuaſion, poſſeſſes ſo much of the ſaving Faith: in this the Philoſopher is ſincere and unanimous with the plain Chriſtian. As to the manner wherein the reward is brought to paſs, whether by a long and complicated proviſion of cauſes already made tending to that effect, or by a diſpenſation to be made hereafter for the purpoſe, ſeems not ſo material: therefore he will be careful to inculcate the main

point upon each man in ſuch manner as may be moſt ſuitable to his comprehenſion, or conſonant to his reaſon.

30. But when taking the Teleſcope in hand, he will diſcern by the imperfections and waſtes appearing in viſible Nature, that it is the part only of a larger ſyſtem, which like the corner of a magnificent building, will appear broken and incompleat, or in ſome of its members ſuperfluous, when ſeen apart from the reſt. He will conſider likewiſe that what ſupernatural works are recorded, were given for ſigns and wonders to awaken mankind, not for any neceſſary uſes which could not have been otherwiſe anſwered in the things whereon they were operated: and as the courſes of Providence are carried on here by the inſtrumentality of ſecondary agents, he will take this world for a ſample of the Whole, preſuming that events throughout the univerſe are conducted by the contrivances of Wiſdom rather than the operations of Power, unleſs occaſionally ſo far as may be requiſite for manifeſtation of the divine dominion to intelligent creatures. And he will ſee, that reward is propounded only for good deeds and voluntary ſufferings, whereas there are many miſchiefs brought upon particular perſons, without their own act or conſent, by the courſes of Providence tending to the general good, for which Equity requires there ſhould be a compenſation.

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From theſe and other conſiderations he may be apt to ſtand perſuaded, there is a univerſal Nature, comprehending things viſible and inviſible proceeding by ſtated Laws ſteady as thoſe of Matter, connecting the ſeveral ſyſtems under one eſtabliſhed polity, adminiſtred like that below by the inſtrumentality of ſecondary agents, that by thoſe laws the particular Spirits are aſſigned to their reſpective bodies before birth, their paſſages from one ſtate of Being to another regulated, their fates and fortunes therein aſcertained. Conformably to this idea, and to the obſervations herein before made upon the adminiſtration of affairs in the moral world, he may conclude, that the grand ſcheme of Providence tends to raiſe human nature to the full perfection which it was proved to fall ſhort of by Adam's tranſgreſſion, and that every thing paſſing here below conduces in ſome ſhape or other to that end.

But to prevent being miſunderſtood, I muſt give notice that I here take human nature in a larger ſenſe than commonly underſtood, extending it to the Hades or region of departed Souls, which I ſuppoſe ſtill remain ſpecifically different from Angels or other inviſible creatures, as they were from birds, beaſts or other animals; therefore have a diſtinct Nature of their own, which I beg leave for the preſent to call the Human: and that this ſpecific difference depends upon ſome ſmall remains of the former

compoſition

compoſition whereto they ſtill continue vitally united, which may have received alterations in its form and texture by what had paſſed with them upon earth. Now the perfection of human nature ſeems neceſſary to inſtate the partakers of it in happineſs: for though God be thanked, we have many enjoyments, and thoſe generally more or leſs in proportion to our good conduct, yet are they mingled with many troubles, nor do the righteous always fare better than the wicked, neither are any exempt from the hazard of evils heavy enough to make the beſt of us imperfect creatures miſerable; therefore we are none of us in a ſtate that can be pronounced abſolutely happy.

For as the Stoics called all men fools and mad, becauſe alike deſtitute of that thorough love of rectitude wherein they placed the eſſence of wiſdom, although they allowed that ſome approached much nearer thereto than others: and they employed the compariſon of a man under water, who being holden an inch below the ſurface, was nearer the freſh air, but nevertheleſs as much in a ſtate of drowning as another plunged twenty fathom deep, ſo we frail mortals, although ſome be plunged deeper in imperfection than others, yet are all alike liable to the miſchiefs of it until the moment of our emerſion, upon which we ſhall at once commence happy creatures. This emerſion then of human nature from the floods of corruption,

appears

appears to be the aim whereto all the diſpenſations of Providence have reſpect; for we have ſeen that the ſentiments and tranſactions of mankind caſt an influence upon one another, nearly or remotely, though in a manner we cannot always trace out: whence may be preſumed that whatever paſſes upon earth, was calculated for producing thoſe ten righteous perſons ſpoken of above, whoſe wiſdom and example will quickly raiſe ſuch others of their ſpecies as have communion with them into the pure ſalubrious air of perfection, wherein they ſhall remain uninterruptedly and invariably happy, liable to no diſquietudes, endangered by no temptations.

31. This ſtate of human nature, totally diſcharged from all remains of original ſin or ſinfulneſs, and the miſeries attendant thereupon, has been figured by the Millennium or kingdom of the juſt: which whether it ſhall happen before or after the conflagration, or be introduced at all upon earth, or whether we may exactly determine its duration by the name given to it, are to my thinking matters of meer ſpeculation. The term Millennium implies that it will not be perpetual, but ſucceeded by a third ſtate of Being ſtill beyond, wherein we ſhall ceaſe to be human creatures in any ſenſe of the word, becoming ſpecifically the ſame with that company among whom we are received. Which ſeems to favour our Hypotheſis of the Mundane

dane Soul, whereinto human nature being abſorbed, the members of it will become incorporated in the univerſal hoſt of ſeparate Spirits vitally united to no material ſubſtance whatever. And this I take to be a matter of importance; becauſe by it alone can be explained how Equity may be fully ſatisfied, notwithanding great inequalities during the ſtates of animal life, and of the Millennium.

But that the kingdom of the juſt, reinſtated in the groſs bodies they formerly poſſeſſed, ſhould be eſtabliſhed here upon earth, ſtands liable to great difficulties: for how narrow ſoever you may contract the pale of ſalvation for grown perſons, you cannot well exclude children dying in innocence, before birth, or under ſeven years old, amounting to above half the ſpecies in all ſucceſſive generations: and it is hard to conceive how the earth, however new modelled, can commodiouſly maintain ſuch a prodigious multitude of inhabitants. Beſides that the tender frame of our bodies, liable to a thouſand diſaſters, is but ill ſuited to a ſtate of ſecurity from all miſchiefs and dangers: or if you ſay that the elements will be changed ſo as contain nothing noxious to life or health, then is the happineſs not owing to the perfection of human nature but of the external, which we do not find the courſes of Providence tending to compleat. Nor need we be ſolicitous for the place where this kingdom

kingdom shall be, for happiness is happiness wherever found, whether upon earth or under ground, in the Sun or in the Moon, in the air or the fields of Ether; while we have a reasonable hope that God intends to raise our nature to perfection and happiness, we may trust him to find a convenient spot where we shall enjoy it fully, and that without a miracle or change of his laws established for the material world.

Nevertheless though I have supposed that when perfection takes place in ten righteous persons, it will quickly spread itself throughout the whole community, it may be remembered that there are degrees of happiness, so that those who shall inhabit the kingdom of the just may be all happy, and yet differ from one another in the intenseness of their enjoyments according to their several former preparations as one star differeth from another star in glory: besides that we know not how long it may be before that kingdom takes place.

I have offered reasons in the Chapter on Redemption to show that in this life we are only made redeemable, not actually redeemed; that multitudes pass off this earthly stage without ever having an opportunity of entering the way of salvation; and that from the article in our Creeds concerning the descent of the united Christ into Hades, it follows that something was done there towards compleating the Redemption

demption of mankind: from whence it may be preſumed, there is a tree of perfection gradually nouriſhing up by the courſes of Providence in the next World, as in the preſent. And until arrived at full maturity, there may ſtill be pains and troubles, greater or leſs, according to their management of themſelves here, even among thoſe who are to be partakers in the kingdom of the juſt.

I thought proper to make this remark, becauſe it may have a good influence upon our conduct in life, on which I would ever keep an eye in all my ſpeculations; for if there be degrees both of reward and puniſhment, if the righteous ſhall differ like one ſtar from another in glory, and he that offendeth much ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, but he that offendeth little with fewer ſtripes, there is an encouragement for every little advance towards virtue. The good will be incited to continual vigilance, not only becauſe it behoveth him that thinketh he ſtandeth to take heed leſt he fall, but becauſe every ſmalleſt ſtep he can make higher than the level where he now ſtands will be an advantage gained: and the wicked, though he ſhould not be able to rid himſelf of all his vices, yet may find it worth while to endeavour removing ſome of them, as he will thereby procure an abatement of his puniſhment. Neither do I apprehend it dangerous to good manners, if it were believed, that the failings of the beſt

men will be attended with ſome future inconveniencies, therefore have ſuppoſed in my Hypotheſis of the Vehicles, that every one carries ſome terrene concretions with him, which will prove extremely troubleſome until he can get them diſcharged. For the doctrine of a Purgatory ſeems innocent in itſelf, or rather ſalubrious, to keep men vigilant as well in leſſer matters, as in ſecuring the main chance: it is only the abſurd notion annexed thereto, of praying or buying ſouls out of purgatory, that renders it a hereſy repugnant to reaſon, to Religion, and to common ſenſe.

32. Upon the foregoing repreſentation made of the kingdom of the juſt, it is apparent, that God in caring for great things does not neglect the ſmall, nor overlooks ſingle perſons in the very ſteps he takes for perfecting the human race. For ſince the happineſs of that kingdom will extend to every individual member thereof, whatever is done towards introducing the kingdom, is done for the benefit of every one who ſhall become a member: ſo that when God brings afflictions upon the righteous by the diſpenſations of his Providence for promoting the grand deſign, he acts more graciouſly for the ſufferer than if he had warded him from them. Hence likewiſe may be underſtood how private intereſt is contained in the general: becauſe none of us can be happy until all are ſo by our common nature being perfected. Therefore

fore he that ſuffers voluntarily in a righteous cauſe, manages moſt prudently for his own private intereſt: for he purchaſes the reverſion of an immenſe eſtate by a preſent payment far inferior in value, and contributes to ſhorten the remoteneſs of the reverſion, or in Scripture language, to haſten the coming of the Lord Jeſus.

Nevertheleſs the plan of Providence contains a multitude of works; there is wheel within wheel, having each their ſeveral uſes, yet ſo admirably adjuſted as not to interfere with the principal deſign. For though nothing be omitted proper for conducing to the general intereſt, yet there are likewiſe particular Providences reſpecting nations, and families, and private perſons, procuring them their proſperities, their ſupports, and their enjoyments, their deliverances, their protections, and their reliefs: as experience may convince any one, who will beſtow a little careful obſervation upon what paſſes within his own knowledge. So that we may reaſonably believe, there is not a ſingle pleaſure withholden, which could have been given without detriment to higher deſigns; and the ſmalleſt things, though certainly they muſt give preference to the greater, not neglected through want of attention.

33. Upon occaſion of the divine care extending to the ſmalleſt things, I ſhall venture to put in a word on behalf of our younger brethren

of the brutal ſpecies: yet it is with fear and trepidation, leſt I ſhould offend the delicacy of our imperial race, who may think it treaſon againſt their high pre-eminence and dignity, to raiſe a doubt of their engroſſing the ſole care of heaven. I ſhall not alledge that Nature has provided the animals with accommodations for breeding, for harbouring, for feeding; becauſe it will be ſaid theſe were given for our ſakes to fit them for our ſervices. But let it be conſidered, that by thoſe very ſervices, they become remotely inſtrumental to our ſalvation: for how could the Divine or the Philoſopher perform the part allotted him in carrying on that great work, without the ſuſtenance, the cloathing, the other conveniencies, he draws from the irrational tribes? or at leaſt if he could, it is fact that he does not, and therefore ſomething is owing to them for the help they give him in his principal concern. Beſides, it has been ſhown in the foregoing pages, that the plan of Providence for perfecting human nature does not ſtand confined to the operations of Religion and Philoſophy, for the polity of nations, the characters and tranſactions of the people, have their ſhare in the work: and the commerce, manufactures, and employments, influencing thoſe things, derive many of their materials and receive much of their aſſiſtance from the inferior creatures.

Then

Then for the orthodox, with whom I am likely to have ſomewhat more difficulty upon this ſubject than with the reaſoner, I beg them to conſider, that oxen, lambs, goats and doves, have by expreſs command of God been ſlaughtered for atonements and ſacrifices, and made ſubſervient to the uſes of Religion. Since then as well by his ſpecial injunctions as by his ordinary Providence, he calls upon the creatures for their labours, their ſufferings, and their lives, in the progreſs of his great work of the Redemption, why ſhould we think it an impeachment of his Equity, if he aſſigns them wages for all they undergo in this important ſervice? or an impeachment of his Power and of his Wiſdom, if ſuch wages accrue to them by certain ſtated laws of univerſal Nature running through both Worlds.

In what manner the compenſation is operated would be needleſs and impoſſible to aſcertain: perhaps they ſtand only one ſtage behind us in the journey through matter, and as we hope to riſe from ſenſitivo-rational creatures to purely rational, ſo they may be advanced from ſenſitive to ſenſitivo-rational. And when our Nature is perfected, we may be employed to act as guardian Angels for aſſiſting them in the improvement of their new faculties, becoming lords and not tyrants of our new World, and exerciſing government by employing our ſuperior ſkill and power for the benefit of the go-

verned: by which way may be comprehended how they may have an intereſt of their own in every thing relative to the forwarding our Redemption. Yet it is not neceſſary they muſt have bodies ſhaped, limbed and ſized exactly like ours: for the treaſures of Wiſdom are not ſo ſcanty as that we ſhould pronounce with Epicurus, there can be no ſpice of reaſon or reflection except in a human figure, and upon the ſurface of an Earth circumſtanced juſt like this we inhabit.

No doubt it will appear a wild and abſurd imagination to fancy, that a dog can ever be made to think and reaſon like a man, and ſo indeed it may be, while you take your idea of the creature from his hairy hide, his long tail, his lolling tongue, and groſs organs of ſenſe; but it is as abſurd to ſuppoſe you can ever teach a ſucking child the mathematics; yet the child may grow to be a man, and then become capable of the ſciences. Nor is it eaſy to conceive how a man, while conſiſting of an unwieldy body with a variety of diſcordant humours circulating therein, can become purely rational, perfectly happy, ſecure from all dangers, proof againſt all temptations; yet we hope that man ſhall one day riſe to the condition of an Angel: then by Man muſt not be underſtood his whole compoſition, but ſome internal part which when diſjoined from the reſt, will ſtill continue to be him: and how know we what internal

nal part may belong to other animals, capable of higher faculties than they now can exerciſe? When the caterpillar changes into a butterfly, we eaſily apprehend it to be the ſame creature with larger powers than it had before, and if we knew the worm had paſſed its time in uneaſineſs, but the fly in a greater degree of pleaſure, we ſhould acknowledge the enjoyments of the one a compenſation for the troubles of the other, both being numerically the ſame.

But when the butterfly dies, we ſee no Chryſalis left behind, yet we are not to think every thing abſolutely loſt that is gone beyond the reach of our ſenſes: there may ſtill remain an imperceptible Chryſalis from whence will iſſue another fly with powers ſuperior to the former; and while the ſame perceptive individual paſſes through all theſe changes, it will continue the ſame creature, notwithſtanding ever ſo many alterations in the external form and ſubſtance. If you grant but that a dog feels me when I pinch him by the tail, this is enough to prove that he has a perſonality, and that what feels the pinch is an individual; for perceptivity cannot belong to a compound, any otherwiſe than as the other component parts may ſerve for channels of conveyance to ſome one which receives the perception entire; and in whatever different compounds this individual reſides, they are ſucceſſively the ſame percipient. Nor is the

caſe otherwiſe with ourſelves, for as has been already obſerved in the Chapter on the Trinity, perſonality and identity belong properly to Spirit, Matter has none of its own, but aſſumes a borrowed perſonality from the particular Spirit whereto it happens to ſtand united.

We all apprehend ourſelves continuing the ſame perſons from the cradle to the grave, notwithſtanding that many believe all the corporeal particles belonging to us change every ſeven years; becauſe the ſame precipient abiding with us throughout makes every freſh ſet of them become a part of ourſelves for the time, while adhering to us, and ſerving for our uſes. And the perſonal identity, currently believed to continue through life in the brutes, reſts upon the ſame bottom with our own: every child who reads the fable of the Old Lion buffeted about by the beaſts in revenge for the tyrannies he had exerciſed over them in his youth, acknowledges he deſerved the puniſhment. But puniſhment is not ordinarily eſteemed juſt, unleſs inflicted upon the very party offending; therefore the whelp, the young, and the decrepit Lion, is conceived all along the ſame identical creature: but this identity muſt depend upon the feeling part, for the corporeal compoſition may be ſuppoſed to fluctuate and change as ours does.

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We have no knowledge of other percipients unleſs by means of their appearance and diſcernible actions, therefore cannot know what other powers they might not exert, if they had other inſtruments to ſerve them: we are ready enough to think that if we had as good a noſe as the hound, we could diſtinguiſh ſcents as well as he; or if we had the wings and piercing optics of the vulture, we could ſoar aloft and diſcern objects as far: what then ſhould hinder but if thoſe creatures had our nice texture of brain, they might make as good uſe of it as we do? or what evidence is there in experience or reaſon to prove that every perceptive individual is not capable of receiving whatever perceptions any organization, vitally united thereto, is capable of conveying? Our phyſiological ſcience does not extend to the laws of Univerſal Nature governing the worlds unſeen, we muſt take our conceptions of them from our ideas of the divine Attributes; and the boundleſs Goodneſs of God is no ſlight evidence to perſuade us that his Mercy ſpreads over all his perceptive creatures to whom he has given an individuality, rendering them unperiſhable, and that he has provided laws among his ſecond cauſes which will raiſe them gradually from a more abject condition to higher faculties, and higher degrees of enjoyment. From whence it ſeems probable there is a general intereſt of animals, comprehending

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that of all other ſpecies together with the human.

I ſhall not ſcruple to own that, however this point be determined, it will make no difference in our treatment of the animals; therefore the generality of mankind to whom it can be of no benefit for their direction in the conduct of life, are welcome to reject it with ridicule and exclamation at the ſtrangeneſs of the thought: but for ſuch as like to handle the Teleſcope, to attempt excurſions into the boundleſs regions of univerſal Nature, and can find a uſe in ſpeculation for warming and enlarging their hearts, it may prove not unavailing. For my own part I place my hopes, not ſo much in any ſuppoſed pre-eminence of my preſent nature, nor merits of my perſon, as in the riches of the divine Bounty: and the farther I can perſuade myſelf that Bounty extends, the higher riſe my hopes. My principal ſolicitude is for the fate of the human ſpecies, becauſe being one of the number compoſing it: but if that be ſecured, if God deſign me an elder brother's portion, I care not how many of our younger brethren he deſtines to receive the like: for I have ſo high an opinion of his inexhauſtible treaſures, as to lie under no apprehenſion, leſt he ſhould be forced to abate from my ſhare in order to make up for theirs. Beſides that a good natured man, who knows what ſlaughters and hard ſervices the animals are put to for our neceſſary uſes, in ſome whereof he

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is forced himſelf to give a reluctant hand, will feel a ſatisfaction in having room to imagine their intereſts ſo connected with ours, that whatever advances the one muſt advance the other, and all they do or ſuffer for our benefit, will in the long run redound to their own.

34. I have now endeavoured to ſhew that there is a general intereſt of the human ſpecies promoted by every thing happening among particulars; and in the laſt ſection have hazarded an attempt to extend that general intereſt to the animals: in which intereſt of the whole ſociety or Genus, the good of individuals is contained; ſo that every one contributing by his labour or his ſuffering, whether deſignedly or accidentally, to the common good, works therein moſt effectually for his own benefit. But though it be better for all individuals, as things ſtand circumſtanced, that whatever paſſes among them ſhould paſs in the manner it does, yet we cannot pronounce it better, either for the whole or individuals, that things ſhould ſtand ſo circumſtanced. Our nature being in a ſtate of degradation, every thing that contributes to improve our condition, is certainly a bleſſing: but we cannot ſay it was for our ſakes that God has placed us in this degraded ſtate. None can deny his almighty power to have made us at firſt a kingdom of the juſt, nor to have given us our nature originally in the ſame perfection, ſuperior to all force of temptation, whereto we believe it capable

ble of being raiſed: neither that the inferior animals might have been formed at once with the higheſt faculties they ſhall ever arrive to.

Beſides, when we comprehend the good of all individuals under that of the ſpecies, this muſt be underſtood with ſome exception: for Religion aſſures us there are wicked creatures, who ſhall never inherit a portion in the kingdom of the juſt; and though the light of Nature does not ſhine ſo ſtrong as that we can read by it the particle Never, yet it ſhews there muſt be miſeries grievous enough to make it glaringly apparent, that the wicked have managed very imprudently for their own intereſts, nor can it diſcover any certain limitations, either in weight or duration, of thoſe miſeries. But can we pronounce it impoſſible that the evil courſes bringing on thoſe miſeries, could have been prevented; or deny that mens characters depend upon the bodily and mental organization, the company and ſituation of life wherein Providence has placed them?

I am far from believing that God impels any man to ſin, but whoever commits it is drawn thereinto by his own luſts; for it is of the very eſſence of ſin that it be a free act of the Will, done with diſcernment of its being wrong; for the very ſame act performed through ignorance or by compulſion of neceſſary cauſes, would be no ſin. But I have already ſhewn in the Chapter on

on Freewill, that the turns of our Volition depend upon motives thrown in by antecedent cauſes, and though ſome of thoſe cauſes may have been influenced by our former good or ill management, yet were we determined in like manner to that management by other prior motives; ſo that our whole tenour of conduct derives originally from the action of external cauſes. But leſt I may be thought ſingular and heterodox in that notion, let us have recourſe to the common opinions: do not we all eſteem it a bleſſing that we were born within the pale of ſalvation, that we have had a good education, have fallen into good company, that there are divine ſervices and ſermons and good books to reſort to, and do not we think ourſelves forwarded in our way to future happineſs by theſe means being put into our hands? or that we might not have entered upon the way at all, had we been utterly deſtitute of them? Yet our birth, our education, our company, our ſervices, ſermons and books, were no acts of ours, they were the bounteous gifts of Providence: but how were they bleſſings, if we ſhould have made as good uſe of our Freewill without them? for it is by the acts of our Volition, not by the ſize of our talents or meaſure of our accidental improvements, that we fix our future fate.

On the other hand, how many poor wretches fill our jails, that have been bred up from their cradle

cradle in all manner of vice and villany? we do not think them fit members for the kingdom of the juſt, yet were they led into their evil courſes unavoidably, nor ought we to judge it improbable that ſome of them might have proved ſaints, had they been favoured with all the ſame advantages that we have. Or ſhall we ſay they might not ſtill be reſcued from the dominion of ſin by him who was able of the very ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham; or if that were impoſſible, could he not have taken them away in their infany while yet in their innocence. Add farther, that we aſcribe the proneneſs to offence an unrulineſs of inordinate deſires prevailing in us all, to the fatal effects of original ſin: but who ſhall preſume to ſay the methods taken for purging off thoſe effects would not have availed to prevent them? Is the efficacy of the divine Perſons ſo confined as that it could operate only upon certain particular ſubjects? If then the Son had been pleaſed to unite himſelf to Adam inſtead of Jeſus, and the holy Spirit deſcended as powerfully upon his immediate deſcendants as upon the Apoſtles, the firſt temptation might have been reſiſted, we might all have been born in Paradiſe, and paſſed a life of unſinning obedience.

Since then God has permitted the fall of the whole human ſpecies, has ſuffered ſome to ſtand in a ſituation from whence there is no chance

chance but they will take the road of deſtruction, and leads the moſt favoured through many troubles and long ſtages of imperfection to the kingdom of the juſt; we may conclude, there is ſome wiſe and gracious purpoſe in all theſe things. For it is incongruous with our idea of his Goodneſs, his Righteouſneſs, and his Holineſs, to imagine that the courſes of his Providence, either in Nature or Fortune, ever bring on any phyſical, or permit any moral evil, unleſs for ſome greater good to reſult therefrom. Now we cannot think it for the good of the human Species, or the animal Genus, that the perfection whereto their natures are deſtined ſhould be ſo long delayed, nor that the miry road of labour, trouble, ſuffering and imperfection, ſhould be made the neceſſary paſſage thereto; much leſs that numbers of them ſhould never attain it at all, but remain objects of puniſhment whereof we can ſee no end: therefore the good muſt redound elſewhere, but where elſe ſhall we trace it? It cannot accrue to our Maker himſelf, for he receives no acceſſion of happineſs from whatever paſſes among his creatures: the benefit then muſt accrue to the hoſt of pure Spirits diſunited from all corporeal mixture whatever, heretofore called the Mundane Soul.

In what manner it accrues we have not materials enow in experience, the baſis of all our ſcience, to explain; ſo far as conjecture can go

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I have already offered my ſentiments in former Chapters: but we may certainly conclude, if any thing can be concluded with certainly from the character of our Almighty Governor we draw from experience of his works, that all the labours and troubles, imperfections, diminutions of happineſs, ſuſpenſions of ſenſe by ſleep, diſtempers or otherwiſe, all the ſufferings and miſeries of this world and the next, ſerve to ſome uſes of inviſible Beings, and are neceſſary to compleat their happineſs: from whence it follows, that they have an intereſt in whatever paſſes here below, as well upon the earth as in the Hades. Therefore the evils ſuſtained by creatures conſiſting of a groſſer or finer material compoſition are important ſervices to others, who are free from that impriſonment: but the impriſonment ſubjecting them to thoſe evils, we muſt acknowledge to have been brought about by the proviſions of heaven, the laws of univerſal Nature. Can we then harbour a ſuſpicion that the righteous judge of heaven and earth will ſuffer his univerſal laws to exact a ſervice from any creature, without aſſigning him competent wages; or impriſon ſome of his children for the benefit of the reſt, without an adequate compenſation? or can we doubt that the fountain of all powers, the Author of all Nature, who carries on his works here by ſecond cauſes proceeding upon certain ſtated rules, was able to enſure the wages and the com-

compenſation by the like methods? Now the moſt obvious way we can conceive the compenſation conſequential upon the ſervices, is by the creatures performing them being, upon diſſolution of their material integuments, admitted into the ſociety of Beings purely ſpiritual: in which caſe they will be ſharers in the advantages they have been made to work out for the ſpiritual nature, and partake of that happineſs they had been employed by their ſufferings to ſupport.

35. It may ſeem incredible that the ſame creature can ever be made to participate in natures ſo widely oppoſite; but let us reflect a little upon what is currently holden by the moſt orthodox. We believe that a human fœtus juſt felt alive by the mother, though ſhewing no more ſigns of ſenſe than an oyſter or ſenſitive plant, may riſe to an equality with the Angels. We believe that every damned Soul in hell was capable of becoming a glorified ſaint, if he had taken the right methods during his abode upon earth. Even Weſley and Whitefield believe that by their terrors and rantings, they have reſcued many a hardened wretch who without their aid would have gone in the certain road to perdition; and if they could teach the Goſpel in Tartary, they ſhould reſcue many who now will periſh eternally: ſo the ſalvation of their penitents depended upon their good fortune in bringing ſuch powerful Apoſtles to

inſtruct them. We believe likewiſe that Angels and Archangels have fallen to a ſtate of degradation below that of men and animals: for I think any man in his ſenſes would chooſe to be an aſs, an oyſter or a beetle, rather than a Devil, and eſteem it a leſs debaſement of his Nature. Thus we ſee, that agreeably to our common notions, the higheſt natures and the loweſt may be exchanged for each other: and that every perceptive individual is capable of being inveſted with any of them, according as the laws of Providence governing the natural, and moral univerſe, ſhall caſt them upon him.

Nevertheleſs the exchange ſpoken of above may be thought contradictory to Scripture, and this is enough to overthrow all other arguments that can be alledged in ſupport of it: but let us conſider in what Spirit the Scriptures are to be conſulted, for we are told the letter killeth, it is the Spirit that maketh alive. There are texts whoſe literal tenor declare expreſsly againſt the rotundity of the Earth and the Copernican ſyſtem, inſomuch that Gallileo was forced to recant them formally by the infallible Vicar of Chriſt under pain of excommunication: yet thoſe opinions now maintain their ground, even among perſons who have the higheſt veneration for the ſacred records. Let us remember the Goſpel was preached to the poor, therefore delivered in a language conformable to their ideas and conceptions: ſo we muſt look there only

only for the rule of Faith and practice, nor can expect to gather any thing from thence concerning matters of ſpeculation; as the point before us certainly is, becauſe if admitted, it could make no alteration in our meaſures of conduct. There is reaſon to believe that at all events, the evil conſequences of a wicked life will be ſo great as to deſerve all our pains and vigilance to eſcape them: and we could employ no more than all our pains and vigilance if they were abſolutely eternal: the ſame methods of piety and good manners are neceſſary, whether they be endleſs, or only temporary, for a continuance to which no body can ſet the certain bounds. And ſhould they be in any ſhape ſerviceable to the ſpiritual hoſt, ſo it may be preſumed the happineſs of compound creatures is likewiſe: but no man can tell whether it be better for that hoſt, that he in particular ſhould make himſelf happy or miſerable, therefore his own good and the good of his own ſpecies is to be his ſole guidance in the choice.

Thus the notion above ſuggeſted can have no influence upon practice, but may have a good influence upon our Faith, although itſelf not a neceſſary article of it: for that is moſt pure and ſaving when containing juſt ſentiments of God, conſiſtent and uniform throughout, liable to no doubts nor difficulties nor wavering. But I have known very pious perſons who found great difficulties in the thought of puniſhment

abſolutely eternal, as it ſeems to indicate an inveteracy, and inſatiableneſs of vengeance utterly repugnant to their ideas of Goodneſs and Holineſs, and as the incurring or eſcaping it depends much upon external cauſes: for though we cannot fail unleſs by our own wilful miſconduct, and muſt work out our ſalvation by our own actions, yet it is undeniable that our Will and hearty deſire to work it out was owing in great meaſure to the ſituation wherein we were born, our education, the company we have fallen into, events touching our hearts, and other favourable circumſtances, none of which were of our own procurement, but derived to us by the courſes of Providence; which ſeems to infer a predilection and reprobation, as utterly repugnant to their ideas of Righteouſneſs and Equity.

The compenſation ſuggeſted above, although made at an immenſe diſtance of time will ſuffice to obviate this difficulty of reconciling the ways of heaven with our ideas of the Attributes; for God to whom a thouſand years are as one day, in whoſe eye the magnitude of objects does not leſſen by their remoteneſs, may counterpoize the neareſt by the remoteſt in the ſcales of his Equity: but no encouragemeet to ſin can be drawn from hence, for things ſo immenſely diſtant do not weigh upon our imagination. Men may poſſibly alledge them in excuſe for what they do upon other inducements, for it is

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not uncommon to miſtake plauſible arguments that may be urged in juſtification of our conduct for the real motives of it; but whatever they may pretend, when they do wrong, it is always ſome pleaſure of the day, ſome preſent paſſion or preſſing deſire that prevailed on them to do it.

If theſe reaſons ſhall be allowed to obviate the objections occurring againſt the ſcheme propoſed in the laſt Section, I know of none other obſtacle that ſhould hinder its reception: and then the general intereſt will be extended to the whole hoſt of created Beings, carrying with it that of every individual contained therein. The ſpiritual Natures will have an intereſt in the mixed, whoſe labours, tranſactions and ſufferings, contribute to the neceſſary ſupport of their happineſs, and whoſe enjoyments leſſen the weight of a burden they lie liable ſome time or other to undergo themſelves: the impriſoned have an intereſt in the ſtate of their elder brethren ſet at large in the fields of happineſs, which in due time will be opened to themſelves; and the ſervices they perform are but improvements of the reverſion they ſhall one day inherit. Thus every perceptive creature becomes a citizen of the Univerſe, entitled to his ſhare in all the privileges and profits thereunto belonging: and whatever he does, or is made to do for the advantage of the whole, redounds to his own private benefit. Nevertheleſs this does not take

off the obligation of purſuing the happineſs of our particular ſpecies, of any leſſer community, of our neighbour, or of our own perſons, by any means that do not bring greater detriment upon others; becauſe, as remarked in a former place, by doing good to any one member of the Univerſe, we add ſomething to the ſtock of enjoyment among the Whole: but it may ſerve for a conſolation under any troubles we are forced to go through in a good cauſe, or ſee falling upon ourſelves or others inevitably, or accidentally, to reflect, that we being ſubjected thereto by that Providence which orders all things for the beſt advantage of our great City, they are purchaſes of an eſtate to our own uſe infinitely more valuable than the price given in payment.

Thus the general intereſt of the Univerſe has this advantage over all leſs general intereſts, that it turns to the account of every individual member, which is not always the caſe with any of the others. There are many unhappy wretches who it is believed will never obtain a place in the kingdom of the juſt, and ſo have no part in that great bleſſing of the human ſpecies: many private perſons reap no benefit from advantages accruing to the nation or ſociety whereto they belong. What are thoſe brave heroes the better who have periſhed in the American expeditions, for our ſucceſſes there? What am I the better who am taxed in my land, and my windows,

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and my beer and my wine, and my dry goods, and almoſt every thing I uſe or poſſeſs? I never expect the return of a ſixpence into my own pocket from all thoſe acquiſitions: therefore eſteem it a piece of virtuous ſelf-denial that I bear my burdens willingly and chearfully, becauſe believing them impoſed for the neceſſary uſes of my country; and look for my amends from the great general intereſt, which I apprehend advanced by every laudable meaſure.

This general intereſt then we may preſume the grand aim whereto all the diſpenſations of providence throughout every world have reſpect, and our gracious Governor acts moſt kindly herein for his creatures, becauſe it is more valuable to every one of them without exception, than any inferior intereſt wherein they may have a ſhare: whence follows that all the ſucceſſes, adverſities, tranſactions and occurrences, among particular ſpecies or communities or ſingle perſons, contribute ſomething in their ſeveral ways towards ſupporting the univerſal happineſs that it may never ſuffer diminution. I ſay ſupporting, for though I have before ſpoken of advancing, there ſcarce ſeems a likelihood that it ſhould admit of an encreaſe, having been given in full meaſure on the firſt creation; as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, becauſe there could be no higher intereſt to be ſerved by a delay, or gradual growth of this from the ſtages of imperfection. But whatever was neceſſary for its

ſuſtentation muſt never have been wanting, from whence it ſeems an unavoidable conſequence, that there ever have been and ever will be Earths and Hades interſperſed among the Univerſe, though the particular creatures have their appointed time to paſs their journey through them, and then take up their abode for an infinitely longer continuance in their proper home, the ſpiritual Nature.

Thus the perfection and happineſs of the Univerſe remains always invariably the ſame, but that of the human ſpecies, with every portion and member of it, perpetually fluctuates: for even when in a ſtate of improvement, that improvement admits of frequent intermiſſions and retrogradations: it is like the tide flowing in waves upon a gently-riſing ſhore, at the return of every wave the water runs backward, though the tide be coming forward all the while. We grow from infancy by gradual but not continual encreaſe, for ſickneſs or accident ſometimes pulls us back, but when recovered therefrom find ourſelves ſtronger the following year than we were the preceding. Few who have improved their fortunes but have met with diſappointments in the way, when things ſeemed to turn againſt them as much as ever they had been favourable, yet thoſe very untoward accidents ſometimes prove the means of making matters better than they were before. We lay in ſtores of knowledge with greedineſs, and when

when ſeeming to have gotten them compleat, find them unmanageable by their number, unfit for uſe, involved in doubts and perplexities; until by long digeſtion, order ſprings imperceptibly out of confuſion, and we have juſt learned to live when it is almoſt time to die. Nor is it likely as argued in a former place, that we ſhould carry our acquiſitions with us, becauſe our old ideas muſt be troubleſome, as giving a hankering after things we can have no more, and caſting a terrifying ſtrangeneſs upon the new ſcenes around us: yet the benefit of them may accrue by their fitting our organs for the exerciſe of powers and attainment of ſciences we were not capable of here; like the motions of a child in the womb, which though of no uſe to it there, render the joints ſupple for the ſubſequent uſes of life.

So likewiſe the growth of nations proceeds, in a manner ſimilar to that of our faculties, by unequal and interrupted advances: invaſion, rebellion, anarchy and confuſion, ſeem to deſtroy their very Being for a while, but upon every emerſion out of thoſe diſorders, they riſe with freſh vigour, and a better ſettled conſtitution than ever they had aforetime.

To come laſtly to the improvement of human nature, which we have compared to a tree, and like a tree it has its winters wherein the leaves and honours fall off, the juices ſtagnate, and it appears withered and lifeleſs. So Religion at times

times has been overwhelmed with ignorance, ſuperſtition, magic, juggling, and the groſſeſt of human inventions: Philoſophy has degenerated into ſophiſtry, captiouſneſs, arrogance, unavailing curioſity, and unintelligible jargon: both have been trampled under foot by ambition, licentiouſneſs, war, deſolation, and barbariſm, inſomuch that neither ſeemed to have any footſteps remaining upon earth. Nevertheleſs Providence has ever preſerved latent ſeeds of both to ſhoot up at intervals in new plants, more vigorous and healthy than thoſe from whence they were produced: and as the vine extends her marriageable arms to claſp the ſturdy elm for her ſupport, and enriches him with her dower of purple or amber cluſters; ſo have they contributed mutually to ſuſtain, to adorn, and to fructify one another.

37. We may preſume the tree of perfection ſtrikes ſtronger root and will arrive ſooner at compleat maturity for being ſometimes cut down, than it would have done by a continual and equable growth. Certain it is that much good does ſpring from evil, our pains often prove the ſource of our pleaſures: enhancing their ſweetneſs by the contraſt, creating new ones in the ſatisfaction of eſcaping them, exerciſing our activity and induſtry which may ſupply us with many we ſhould miſs of; diſappointment whets our ſagacity and adds treaſures to our experience; even vice and folly

have

have their ſhare in contributing to the ſervices and conveniencies of the world. How ſhould we man our fleets or recruit our armies, if there were no ſuch thing as idleneſs, extravagance and debauchery in the kingdom? I believe few even among the pooreſt ever breed up their children to thoſe ſervices, ſo that if none were taken into them who did not enter out of prudence or deliberate choice, I fear the little ſtate of Genoa might be able to overrun us. The parents wiſh their lads to get a ſafe and honeſt livelihood upon land by their labour, or to learn ſome manual trade for a ſubſiſtence: but when a young fellow is good for nothing elſe, or becomes involved in debt, or hampered in ſome dangerous amour, then away he goes to make food for powder, or a ſop in the briny broth of Ocean. And when commenced warriour, he becomes ſerviceable more by his imperfections than his good qualities: the watchings and faſtings, the wants, diſtreſſes, bangs and bruiſes, he has brought upon himſelf by his irregularities, inure him to a hardineſs that nothing can hurt; his averſeneſs to forethought and the habit of ſinging Hang ſorrow, caſt away care, render him intrepid, becauſe blind to danger, inſenſibility proving a ſuccedaneum in the place of fortitude; that hardeſt of virtues to be acquired by contemplation and reaſoning, and laſt learned by the Divine or Philoſopher.

Nor

Nor is it unfrequent that the vices ſerve like rotten dung to force up thoſe exotic plants the Virtues in us: violence unites the oppreſſed for their mutual defence, gives them a liking to one another and teaches the rudiments of Charity; injury, together with the many contrivances employed for colouring it over, urge us to examine into the real eſſence of Juſtice; craft and cozenage keep us perpetually upon our guard, put our faculties to the ſtretch, and lay the foundation of Prudence, that corner-ſtone of all the other virtues. The greateſt part of our profitable experience we gather from the wickedneſs and follies falling within our notice; and he that had never met with a cheat, would ſtand open to be impoſed upon by the firſt that ſhould take him in hand. The ſimplicity of innocence ſeems to have been the ſource of all our misfortunes, for if Eve had been deceived before by the ſerpent into ſome imprudences not criminal, ſhe might have been aware of his wiles, and eſcaped that fatal error which proved the condemnation of us all. Our own miſcarriages diſcover to us the weakneſs of our nature, and direct us what cares to take for amending it; they mortify our pride, convince us of our dependence, and ſhow that we are not maſters of our own actions and thoughts, thereby manifeſting the neceſſity of management and diſcipline to bring them into order. Temptations are neceſſary

to

to invigorate our reſolution by continually ſtruggling with them; for he will never get an unſhaken ſeat in the ſaddle, who never rides an unruly horſe. More than half the employment in life, and half the uſe of reaſon ſprings from our inordinate appetites and the unreaſonableneſs of others: were thoſe totally removed, there would be no buſineſs for diſcretion, nor vigour of mind enabling us to purſue ſteadily the determinations of our judgement. Nothing ſo eaſy as to live among a ſociety of equitable obliging perſons, without paſſion or deſire of our own to diſturb us; we ſhould never know our wants or infirmities, nor make any advance towards perfecting our nature: but it is war and powerful reſiſtance that make the hero, oppoſition and counterplotting that compleat the politician. The violence, greedineſs and ſelfiſhneſs of a wicked world, require and teach us ſkill and fortitude to ſteer with a ſafe conſcience among them; the unrulineſs of our own appetites and deceitfulneſs of ſin, oblige us to act with policy and practiſe the art of making little advances for the intereſts of virtue under favourable circumſtances.

Add further that wickedneſs and paſſion ſet many excellent examples, by impelling to deeds that virtue might be glad to copy: for it is not beneath us to learn of any body, provided we apply our learning to better uſes than thoſe who taught us. The moraliſts exhort us to this method.

thod. Juvenal addreſſes his pupils the ſame way; Villains, ſays he, can leave their beds before day to cut people's throats, why then cannot you take an hour from your pillow for your health and ſpirits ſake? The divine moraliſt recommends our imitation of the unjuſt ſteward in his provident care for the future that he might be received into a commodious habitation when turned out of his preſent. It would do us no hurt to take pattern from the Devil who goeth about, like a roaring lion, ſeeking inceſſantly whom he may devour, and ſetting all his wits at work to draw the prey into his ſnares, if we could learn thereby to be as indefatigable in doing good as he is in wreaking his malice: and thoſe diſciples of his who have ſpent years of toil and trouble in contrivances to glut their revenge, may teach us perſeverance in the proſecution of a good deſign through the greateſt diſcouragements and difficulties that may ſtand in our way. The command of paſſion and eaſineſs under abuſe, practiſed by the ambitious, the compliance with all humours by the flatterer, the hardineſs of the night-robber, the application of the pick-pocket, the wire dancer and the balance-maſter, to become expert in their ſeveral arts, the fearleſſneſs of death, the contempt of pain and diſtreſs in the common ſoldier or ſailor, may ſerve as leſſons and incitements from whence we may draw ſomething to our advantage: for though

theſe

theſe things can ſcarcely be called Virtues in the perſons who poſſeſs them, yet are they ingredients which may well enter into the compoſition of virtue.

38. We may obſerve that God, in the courſes of his Providence, employs evils to bring forth excellent purpoſes: he raiſes kingdoms from bands of Robbers, Outlaws and Pirates, by rapine, violence, rebellion, miſrule and narrow ſelfiſhneſs of all kinds. How much are we obliged to the Norman invaſion, unrulineſs of the Barons, uſurpations of the Pope, diſſoluteneſs of the Monks, deſpotic paſſion of the laſt Harry, hypocritical zeal for Religion and liberty in the next age, and headlong ſuperſtition of a Popiſh monarch, for our preſent happy conſtitution? and I may add, for the robuſtneſs and vigour of it, to the encroaching temper of a neighbouring nation. He maintains the polity of nations by ambition, thirſt of title and of power, for who would ſubmit to be thwarted in the cabinet, baited in Parliament, and lampooned in public, without ſome fond paſſion for rule to tickle his fancy? he preſerves their liberty by licentiouſneſs, impatience of controul, and envy, for who would ever mind what the miniſters do, if it were not for the ſecret pleaſure there is in the thought of mortifying the great? He leads to a principle of Honour, that nobleſt ſentiment in the human breaſt, by the deſire of excelling, inſomuch that

that ſome have made emulation a virtue: he ſharpens our faculties by the whetſtone of perverſeneſs and litigiouſneſs, which drive us to clear conception by the pains taken to miſunderſtand us, teaches ſobriety and diſcretion by ſeeing reaſon turned to wanton ſpeculations or miſchievous purpoſes, and made an advocate for the paſſions; he exerciſes our patience by the diſeaſes, pains and troubles, conſequent upon our intemperance and follies, awakens our vigilance by the ſelf-partiality of all whom we have to deal with, ſpurs us to activity by the preſſing importunity of our deſires, and weans us from this world by our eagerneſs in hunting after pleaſures until they cloy with continual repetition.

Nor does he find the wickedneſs of men improper wheels for carrying on his moſt important deſigns among them: the turbulence of the Gracchi, ambition of the Ceſars, the exorbitancy of the Romans ſwallowing up their neighbouring nations one after another, the diſcords and factions among thoſe nations rendering them an eaſy prey, all contributed to eſtabliſh that peace and continual intercourſe throughout a great part of the then known world, which was neceſſary for forwarding the promulgation of the Goſpel. The treachery of Judas, and inveteracy of the Jews crying, Crucify him, crucify him, were made the principal inſtruments in working out our Redemption: trials and

perſecutions

perſecutions were ſent to perfect the firſt diſciples: ſuperſtition and prieſtcraft have occaſioned the calling in reaſon to diſcover their artifices, and purify Religion from their corruptions: enthuſiaſm on the one hand, and free-thinking on the other, ſtill continue to keep us in the golden mean, and rub off the foulneſs of all kinds that is apt to gather about us. Temperance, patience, humility, fortitude, and moſt of our other virtues, conſiſt in reſiſting our appetites and walking uprightly amidſt the violent, the deceitful, the voluptuous and the ſelfiſh: ſo that reaſon and inordinate deſire ſeem to be the two antagoniſt muſcles which give motion to the buſineſs of life; if either of them loſe its tone, the other becomes enfeebled, or convulſed, and a paralytic diſorder enſues.

Nor does there want room to imagine that good may ſpring out of evil in other ſoils than thoſe of this ſublunary globe; we read that the wicked were created for the day of the Lord, and this may be underſtood not only as their puniſhment ſerves for a warning to keep the juſt in their duty by ſtrengthening their averſion to the cauſes of the miſeries exhibited, but as the righteous may find ſomething in the characters of the wicked capable of being turned to their own advantage: for we have ſeen above, that vice does ſometimes produce outward actions in this world, which if proceeding from

virtue, would be the higheſt exerciſes of it, why then ſhould we judge it impoſſible, that the like may happen in the next? That unmoveable determination upon a particular purpoſe, that impetuoſity of reſolution and inſenſibility to impending miſchiefs, obſerved in the reprobate, may inſtruct the righteous how to imitate them upon better occaſions: And if, as ſuppoſed in the Viſion, they have the entire command of their paſſions to ſtir them up for particular ſervices as wanted, they may find examples of more vigorous paſſion in vicious characters, and take ſtronger impreſſions by means of their ſentient language, than perhaps reaſon could ever work up. Then for the purely ſpiritual hoſt, although we cannot certainly tell, how the evils among inferior creatures operate to their benefit, yet that they do ſo operate, I have already given reaſons to evince.

Since then we find evil, as well moral as phyſical, productive of many ſalutary fruits, why ſhould we deem it unworthy a place in the plan of Providence, or the permiſſion of it repugnant to our ideas of Goodneſs and Holineſs? for it is the ultimate end had in proſpect, not the means neceſſary to attain it, that denominate the quality of an action. Therefore it ought not to be made a rock of offence, nor thought an impeachment of the divine Goodneſs, that evil is permitted: our opinion of that Attribute need

need only perſuade us that God never terminates his view upon evil, not even of the particular creature whereon it falls. He ſuffers frailties in the good for their trial, their warning, their inſtruction, their correction and amendment: he ſuffers vicious characters for advantage of the community: he ſuffers wickedneſs, diſſolution and deſtruction in communities, for promoting his gracious deſigns in the advancement of human nature: he ſuffers imperfection, reprobation and miſery in the ſpecies, for ſome unknown benefit redounding therefrom to the ſpiritual hoſt, in which hoſt every perceptive individual in the creation has its principal intereſt. And nothing hinders but we may believe that our gracious Governor has reduced the quantity of evil in the whole Univerſe to as ſmall a compaſs as was poſſible in the nature and conſtitution of things.

39. That Nature and things were originally ſo conſtituted as to make any quantity neceſſary, is matter of Creation, which we have no faculties nor light from experience to underſtand: for the firſt Creation muſt have been a pure act, but we never ſaw a Creation, nor have any conception of a pure act proceeding without motives occurring from obſervation of pre-exiſtent objects; and it has been ſhown elſewhere, that there muſt have been other Attributes, whereof we have no imagination, con-

cerned in the buſineſs of Creation. But like Moſes we are admitted only to ſee the back parts of God, or rather the image of them reflected in his works, for no man can ſee his face and live, or while he lives: it is no wonder then we do not diſcern the full beauty and ſymmetry of the Attributes, ſome whereof are to us unſeen and utterly unknown. And yet if there appear any imperfection in the reflected image, it is owing to the deficiency of our optics: for could we behold diſtant good in as ſtriking colours as preſent pleaſure, and had we a juſt ſenſe of the vaſt diſproportion evil bears to good throughout the Univerſe, and in the portion of every individual member, we ſhould deſpiſe it for its ſmallneſs, nor think it any abatement in our idea of Goodneſs. We have ſeen in former Chapters, there is no reaſon to eſtimate it higher than in proportion to the length of our journey through matter, compared with that of the abode in ſpiritual ſubſtance; or the number of creatures in a ſtate of imperfection to thoſe partaking of the purely ſpiritual nature, that is, one to many millions of millions. But let us take it only at one million and compute how many years a million of minutes will amount to, which we ſhall find above two and twenty: if then a man were to live to the age of Methuſalah, in perfect happineſs and full enjoyment of every thing he could deſire,

deſire, excepting only that he were to be in pain for one minute in every two and twenty years, he would find no cauſe to complain or murmur at the hardneſs of his lot. But our minutes of trouble ſometimes come ſo thick together that they make a length farther than we can diſcern objects with an affecting clearneſs: ſo that the millions of joyful minutes beyond the line have no weight in our eſtimation, not for want of real ſubſtance, but becauſe our concern being engaged by things in proportion to their nearneſs, we can raiſe none for thoſe lying very remote; and thus our ſcruples ariſe from the imperfection of our judgement, ſetting a value ſolely upon things near at hand, and unable to diſcern a goodneſs the effects whereof we do not immediately feel.

Yet there are many perſons whom a little ſober conſideration can ſatisfy, that it is no impeachment of Goodneſs to bring on a few phyſical evils, which work out a much greater good: but the grand ſtumbling block lies in moral evil, for which they cannot conceive that proviſion ſhould be made by a righteous and holy Being. But Righteouſneſs and Holineſs cannot vary from Goodneſs, therefore whatever is ultimately productive of good, muſt be right and holy: for the very eſſence of moral evil depends upon natural; ſin were no ſin, nor would God or reaſon forbid it, if the works of it never

brought hurt or damage upon any creature whatever. Therefore phyſical evil being once accounted for, there is no difficulty in accounting for the moral; for if the miſchiefs it produces be neceſſary in the Univerſe, they muſt fall ſomewhere, and as I have already argued in the Chapter upon Holineſs, it is more gracious and merciful that they ſhould be incurred by wilful tranſgreſſion, than commanded as a duty or impoſed as an inevitable burden upon the righteous. Nor need we fear that, vent being given to wickedneſs, it ſhould overflow beyond bounds to make havock in the Creation: for God who has all hearts in his hand, and can raiſe up children unto Abraham of the ſtones, can mark out the exact limits to iniquity, that it ſurpaſs not what is juſt neceſſary for his gracious purpoſes, and reſcue the moſt obdurate from the dominion of it whenever that neceſſity comes.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Imitation of God.

WE are exhorted in the Goſpel to be holy as God is holy, perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, and reaſon directs, that although we muſt never expect to hit the mark of perfection, yet we ought always to take our aim directly towards it, and endeavour to ſhape our proceedings by the compleateſt model. Now what compleater model can we have, than the fountain of Wiſdom and bleſſings who is gracious in all his dealings, good and righteous in all his ways, with whom is no envy nor malice, nor paſſion, nor error, nor ſelfiſhneſs, no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of change. Nevertheleſs as there is no rule ſo ſalutary that may not be perverted to miſchievous purpoſes, men may take occaſion to juſtify their wicked practices under a notion of imitating the divine example: and I ſhould be very ſorry to have given a handle for ſuch plea by having in ſeveral parts of this work aſcribed all events to the proviſions of Heaven, made in certain knowledge and purpoſe of their being produced thereby; and particularly in the laſt Chapter repreſented both moral and phyſical evil as comprized within the plan of Providence,

and employed to work out its gracious designs; which some perhaps may interpret, making God the Author of sin, the encourager and approver of all that is committed.

Now I do not fear to be suspected of such an intention by any candid disputant, for it is always esteemed unfair to charge an antagonist with consequences following from his doctrines, which he does not see and does not avow. But this consequence I utterly disclaim; yet shall not rest contented with such defence, being not so solicitous to save my own credit, as to prevent mischief ensuing to any body from the things I advance: therefore although I have already handled this point in the Chapter on Holiness, shall give it a re-examination here, esteeming repetition and superfluity more pardonable than deficiency upon a matter of this importance, because one may have the luck to cast a light upon things in a second attempt, rendering them apparent to persons with whom one had failed in the first.

I shall observe then, that we do not always imitate another by doing the same actions that he does, where the stations and powers are different, but by conducting ourselves within our province with the same temper, dispositions and views. The private man, who should take state upon him because done by the king, or punish a criminal because having seen the like

procedure in a magiſtrate, could never juſtify himſelf upon their example, becauſe they would not have done the like in his circumſtances, for the ſame deed may proceed from oppoſite principles in different agents. But we muſt remember, that God is in heaven and we upon earth, that his knowledge is infinite, his command over all things, and there is nothing external to interfere with his work, or obſtruct his operations in the Univerſe: therefore he diſcerns the exact conſequences of evil, and is able to reſtrain it within certain bounds that it produce none but ſuch as are ſalutary, neither is there hazard of any accident to hinder the ſucceſs of his meaſures. To us he has given a portion of underſtanding and power, and a narrow ſphere to act in, wherein it is our buſineſs to conduct ourſelves by the ſame ſpirit as obſervable in his Providence, that of ordering all things for the beſt, according to our little ſkill to diſcern it. But our proſpects being ſhort, we can never ſee to the remoteſt conſequences of our actions, therefore muſt take moral good for our guide, directing us to ſuch as are profitable: if it ſometimes ſeem leading into inconveniencies, yet we know not what unthought of miſchiefs may enſue upon other occaſions by weakening its authority with ourſelves or others: for if we loſe ſight of our polar ſtar, we ſhall quickly wander into inextricable difficulties,

difficulties, nor can juſtify ourſelves upon the example of him, whoſe Wiſdom ſets him above the need of any guidance.

2. But our faculties being ſcanty, we cannot carry in our imagination every thing that our reaſon convinces us muſt be truth, without great damage to ourſelves; for which reaſon, although we muſt confeſs that all events proceed with the knowledge and acquieſcence of Providence, nevertheleſs there is a neceſſary diſtinction to be made between things Providential, and others that are not, as I have endeavoured to explain in the Chapter bearing that title: nor ought we ever to aſcribe things trivial or wicked to God, for fear of giving us a fondneſs for the one, or leſſening our abhorrence of the other. For there is a different ſet of ideas, a different turn of conception and language for contemplation, and for common uſe: therefore it is remarkable, that in exhortatory diſcourſes upon this ſubject, we are cautioned againſt believing God the Author of ſin, the phraſe employed is not his being the cauſe, for this manner of expreſſion is not uſually current in common ſpeech; on the other hand in our ſpeculations, to whatever original cauſes we may aſcribe the exiſtence of moral evil, we never ſpeak of him as being the author of it, for cauſe and author are two very different things. He who takes out an execution for a ſum which the debtors effects are but juſt ſufficient

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to raiſe, may be the cauſe of his being reduced to poverty and diſtreſs, but cannot with propriety be charged as the author of his troubles: a Juſtice of peace reading the proclamation to a mob of rioters, who he knows will not diſperſe, is the cauſe of the felony and the puniſhment conſequent thereupon, yet cannot be called the author of them, nor imputable therewith: for being the author implies giving a ſanction or authority to a thing, doing it with delight or ſetting it as a precedent to be followed. Therefore if any man ſhould happen to believe God the cauſe of ſin, it will do him no hurt, provided he do not imagine him the immediate cauſe impelling or drawing thereinto ſupernaturally, nor that the commiſſion of it will ſtand approved or excuſed in his ſight, or be the leſs obnoxious to puniſhment upon that account.

But the perplexities involving this ſubject ſpring from mingling conceptions belonging to the two languages together by a kind of half-reaſoning, that ſuffices to raiſe difficulties but not purſue them to an iſſue: for there are thoſe who will argue, that if cauſes were provided for the production of evil, the commiſſion of it muſt be approved of; for it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that God would admit an event into his plan, which he ſhould not approve of when happening. But why ſo? The magiſtrate abovementioned might not approve of the felony he gave occaſion to by an act performed for the preſervation of peace and diſcouragement of riots; and

and a man may take phyſic without approving of the commotions it will raiſe in him, if he thinks it expedient for his health's ſake: ſo God may permit wickedneſs he does not approve of, for the ſake of the conſequences to reſult from it. Well but, ſay they, this will make the matter worſe, for thoſe conſequences are the grievous puniſhment of the tranſgreſſor: ſo you repreſent the ſupreme Being as craftily malicious, giving courſe to iniquity that he may have juſt cauſe to take vengeance on the perpetrators. So indeed I own it muſt be regarded if we ſtop at the puniſhment, but the miſtakes all along proceed from our ſticking half way without carrying our thoughts to the end, which the ſuffering ought not to be eſteemed, for there are the ſervices reſulting to the Univerſe beyond, whereto the eye of Providence extends: therefore God no more delights in the puniſhment than he approves the ſin, but permits both for the neceſſary uſes they are of to his Creation.

Thus if evil be permitted by him, or even were the cauſes of it appointed by his Providence, we could not then pronounce it approved or pleaſing in his ſight: for it is a too ſubtile refinement upon words, drawing them out of their genuine ſenſe, to underſtand by Diſapproved, an event that happens againſt his Will, for nothing can ever ſo happen; or by Diſpleaſing, ſomething that gives him uneaſineſs or vexation,

vexation, for theſe he is not capable of receiving. But in the obvious natural ſenſe of approbation and pleaſure wherein alone we have any concern to regard them, they belong to actions whereto God has annexed a bleſſing or reward: and if we take them in this proper ſignification as commonly underſtood, it will not follow that evil is approved or pleaſing, becauſe permitted for the ſake of ſome neceſſary uſes, accruing from the puniſhment incurred thereby. The approbation of God reſts wholly and ſolely upon our good actions, and our endeavours to promote them, as well in ourſelves as others, are alone pleaſing in his ſight; even in caſes where it is his Will, for wiſe purpoſes to us unknown, that thoſe endeavours ſhould not ſucceed. If the maſter of a veſſel having a hundred hands on board, being overtaken in a ſtorm, employ all his care and diligence to weather it, and be excited to exert himſelf more ſtrenuouſly in compaſſion to his crew and juſtice to his owners, nevertheleſs the ſhip with all its freight is overwhelmed in the ſea: we muſt conclude from the event, that it was the Will of Heaven they ſhould periſh, yet both God and man will applaud the Maſter though he did his utmoſt to oppoſe that Will, becauſe he did it not in the ſpirit of oppoſition, but in compliance with the rules of rectitude, which we are always to look upon as the Will of God.

In

In like manner we may gather, from experience of ourſelves and all around us, it has pleaſed God to permit, that folly and wickedneſs of all kinds ſhould abound in the world, and that we ourſelves ſhould be foiled by temptations: yet we ſhall become moſt acceptable to him by ſetting ourſelves with all our might to oppoſe the growth of wickedneſs, and ſtruggle againſt every temptation aſſailing us. For though it ſhould be his Will that offences ſhall come, it is not his Will that we ſhould cooperate thereto: therefore wo is to him by whom they come. I have obſerved in the laſt ſection of the preceding Chapter, that inordinate deſire and reaſon ſeem to be the two antagoniſt muſcles giving motion to all the buſineſs of life, ſo that the buſineſs is carried on by the contrary action of thoſe muſcles: if there were no temptation, virtue would have little work to do; if there were no virtue, temptation would fail of its deſtined effect; but the work is compleated by the reſiſtance of one againſt the other. God has been pleaſed to aſſign us the exerciſe of reaſon for our taſk, this then is to be our attention and our care, whatever we perceive tending to draw us aſide from that exerciſe, we are to reſiſt to the utmoſt: if he has any ſecret purpoſe to overpower our reaſon, there is no fear that by reſiſting we ſhould defeat it, for the purpoſes of God will always take effect,

effect, and a better effect for us upon our reſiſtance, when made out of a regard to our duty. Therefore let us keep ſteadily to the province allotted us, eſteeming it preſumption and ſacrilege to encroach upon the divine Prerogative: for the permiſſion of evil is the prerogative of God reſerved ſolely to his own management, he alone knows the proper meaſure of it, and when it will produce more ſalutary than pernicious fruits among his creatures.

3. The benefits of evil, for which we may preſume it was permitted, accrue either to particular perſons, or to communities, or the Species, or the Univerſe: to particular perſons it ſerves for their trial, their correction, their humiliation, and awakening their vigilance; but there can be no trial of ſtrength without exerting it in oppoſition to the adverſary, no correction without endeavours to mend the frailty when diſcovered, a voluntary defeat will not prove a humiliation becauſe we may think we could have conquered had we tried for it, and our vigilance is not awakened unleſs we ſtand upon our guard againſt future ſurprizes; therefore ſo far as we willingly give way to temptation, we prevent the good effects it might have had upon us. Nor can we know the exact meaſure proper for our uſes, or if we could, it were needleſs to do any thing for compleating it, for we may reſt

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assured that the proper measure is already provided in our own frailty and the external allurements around us: so we have no occasion to encrease it, but as we are taught to pray, Lead us not into temptation, it is incumbent upon us to use our endeavours towards preventing what we pray against, or else our prayers will be but hypocrisy and mockery, being themselves the very evil we pray to escape.

Neither can we know the conduciveness of evil to any more or less general interest, therefore can have no warrant to give it scope: we see nothing but disorder and mischief come from it, the intricate channel by which good flows from that disorder and mischief are discernible to God alone; therefore the permission of it may be gracious and holy in him, yet the practice of it would be malignant and wicked in us. There is room to apprehend the advantage accrues ultimately to the spiritual host, and it was for their sakes that evil has a place in nature; but we can form no rule from thence for shaping our measures, for want of light to discern in what manner the advantage accrues: for though it be probable they have an interest in all transactions and occurrences passing here below, yet we can never know what particular conduct is most expedient for them to be pursued. Perhaps it may be matter of consequence to the Mundane Soul, whether I shall

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put on my light or my dark coloured ſuit to morrow, but if I ſtudy till morning I ſhall never find out which of the two it is beſt for him that I ſhould wear; therefore I ſhall make my choice upon the ſame ground that other people go upon, by the rules of civility and decency, or if they have no directions to give in the caſe, then by my own humour and fancy: for we may truſt the diſpoſition of Providence that in every action, important or trivial, if rightly performed according to the occaſion, all the good poſſible ſhall redound therefrom to every creature whom it can any ways affect.

But if upon theſe indifferent matters we can gather no clue of direction from the general intereſt of the creation, much leſs in thoſe of the higheſt concern to ourſelves: what though we may juſtly conclude from the floods of wickedneſs permitted in the world, that they are of ſome neceſſary uſes, it is impoſſible for us to know whether it be better for the Univerſe, that we in particular ſhould lead a wicked life: thus much we may know, that if better, it is ſo by means of the heavy puniſhment it will bring upon us, ſerving for an example or other unknown benefit to the beholders; which puniſhment is an apparent evil deſerving our utmoſt efforts and vigilance to eſcape, nor are we to concern ourſelves with any thing beyond it, but are taught to look upon it as an eternity boundleſs in our eye. So far as the lights of our un-

derſtanding extend, there is reaſon to believe, that we ſerve the Univerſe beſt by doing the moſt good we can to ourſelves and other members of it, becauſe we add thereby to the ſtock of enjoyment in Nature: we have nothing to do with additions to be made any other way, to attempt prying into them would be meddling with matters far above our reach.

4. Nor have we ſo much to do for the general intereſt of the Species as we frequently imagine; the progreſs of perfection is carried on by the ſecret and intricate windings of Providence, to us utterly unknown, and many times appearing deſtructive of their purpoſe, therefore no objects of our imitation: the only obvious means are by embracing all opportunities that occur of advancing true Religion and reaſon, diſcretion and good manners, in ſuch ways as our own conſiderate judgement, or that of other perſons of approved characters may recommend. We take too much upon ourſelves when pretending to reform mankind by other methods, by pulling down idols, demoliſhing meeting-houſes, perſecuting, damning and cenſuring heretics, or by ridiculing things ſacred, combating received opinions, and the like, without a calm examination of what effects our procedure herein is likely to produce: for this is acting by indiſcreet zeal and impulſe of paſſion, wherein we do not copy the moſt perfect pattern, who proceeds upon Intelligence and Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, as well in his judgements as in his bleſſings, as well when he reſtrains, as when he permits of hereſy and ſuperſtition.

And though the temporal intereſts of mankind claim the preference before thoſe of any part, yet do we ſeldom ſtand in a ſituation to look farther than the proſperity of our own country whereto we belong: wherefore in lawful wars the ſubjects on oppoſite ſides may do their duty, and act agreeably to the Will of God, in oppoſing, weakening, or deſtroying one another, and taking every method that offers of doing ſervice to their reſpective community. Even the public good of the community is too large to be the object of our conſtant attention; and in fact, in theſe climates of liberty and ſelf-ſufficiency, does occupy more of it, than avails to any good purpoſe. How fond are our plebeians to ſit in judgement upon laws and public meaſures, to paſs ſentence upon the miniſters and to mend the nation, when they had better been minding their ſhops and their trades? It is certainly for the preſervation of liberty, that every one ſhould be ready to cry out when he is hurt, and to join in with the complaints of thoſe who have cauſe for them: but to cry before he is hurt or has any well grounded apprehenſion of danger, upon a flying report, a ſurmiſe, private intereſt, reſentment, wantonneſs or diſlike, tends to diſcredit the voice of the people and leſſen their weight, that ſureſt counterpoize againſt power,

and ſtrongeſt bulwark both of liberty and national ſtrength.

Nor are we leſs officious in meddling with one another's affairs than thoſe of our ſuperiors, we muſt needs play the cenſor upon our neighbour's character and actions, lay out his expences, regulate his dreſs, ſettle his table and diſpoſe of his children: and all this not with a probable view of doing any good to him or ourſelves thereby, but only to gratify our vanity by the contraſt of his follies and imperfections. As we are members of the ſpecies and of the community, and have our principal ſtake among them, it is our duty, our praiſe, and our trueſt intereſt to conſult their benefit preferably to our private advantage, whenever the two happen to come viſibly into competition, and as we live in ſociety we are to do our parts towards rendering it as beneficial as lies in our power, to every member of it within our reach. Therefore whenever the intereſt of Religion or practical Philoſophy may be forwarded by our aid, when an improvement in any ſcience or art, or manufacture, or convenience for benefit of mankind can be made, any ſervice done to the public, any real good procured for our neighbour, whether by inſtruction, exhortation, cenſure, ridicule, example, or otherwiſe, it is a noble ſelf-denial to ſtop ſhort in the purſuit of our own deſires, that we may apply our induſtry to the greater advantage of others.

But

But opportunities of this ſort rarely happen to moſt of us, we are not of ſuch importance as that much of what paſſes around ſhould depend upon our management; therefore our principal attention is due to the conducting ourſelves well in our own affairs and ſeveral profeſſions, for thereby we ſhall contribute the moſt effectually we can, towards promoting all other more general intereſts. And in ſo doing we ſhall be of more importance than we can perceive, for we are ſtationed and portioned by Providence, in whoſe works every little engine employed is neceſſary for compleating the great deſign when acting in the ſphere aſſigned it. This then is our province, or I may call it the little world which God has put under our government: it is our buſineſs to know the extent of our province that we may not encroach upon territories beyond our commiſſion, and to lay our narrow plan of providence for the adminiſtration of it ſimilar, ſo far as human infirmity will permit, though immenſely unequal, to his univerſal one; ordering every thing therein for the beſt according to the meaſure of underſtanding and power vouchſafed us. But our diſcernment being ſhort and our powers feeble, it will behove us to avail ourſelves of thoſe methods that have been preſcribed for enlarging the one, and invigorating the other: thoſe then I purpoſe next to take under conſideration, examining into their ſeveral uſes and manner of operation,

in hopes to reſcue them from the contempt they have lain under with ſome perſons, and to ſettle their value upon the right bottom which has been miſplaced by others; whereby we may the better learn, how to apply them in due meaſure and upon proper occaſions.

CHAP. XXI.

Chriſtian Scheme.

BY the methods preſcribed for enlarging our diſcernment and invigorating our powers ſpoken of at the concluſion of the laſt Chapter, it will eaſily be underſtood that I had in view the Chriſtian inſtitutions: the examination whereof is beſt purſued by a calm and careful exerciſe of our judgement upon their ſeveral uſes and operations. But the ſureſt baſis and neceſſary guidance for forming a judgement upon the parts of a ſyſtem, can only be found in the general ſcope and main deſign of the whole, and the ſpirit wherein it was delivered: which will enable us to attain a clear conception of the words and phraſes as we go along. The gifted preacher, when talking moſt ſweetly and with power, ſo as to raiſe extatic tranſports in his audience, runs on in a ſtring of animating words with no determinate meaning. Whether or no this

this be the proper method for confirming and ſtrengthening the godly, it is certainly not the right way to ſucceed upon the rationaliſt, whom I am to deal with: for he will expect to be addreſſed in an intelligible language, rather calculated to inform the underſtanding, than to warm the heart or touch the ſprings of affection. Now the common language of mankind being various and fluctuating, the ſame terms and the ſame expreſſions carrying a very different ſenſe according to the occaſion whereon they are employed, nothing but an attention to the purpoſe wherewith, and ſpirit wherein they were delivered, can aſcertain their proper force. Neither poetry, nor rhetoric, nor argumentation, nor perhaps any other performances except in mathematics, can be fully underſtood without entering into the ſpirit of the performer. And the Scriptures being given in the language of the Jewiſh populace, and abounding in figurative myſterious expreſſions, many times ſeeming at firſt ſight contradictory; it is no where more eminently true than here, That the letter killeth, but the ſpirit maketh alive.

But as you muſt pour water into a pump, before you can draw a ſupply of water from thence; and give fire to a cannon in order to excite the fire of the powder: ſo without a proper ſpirit of enquiry, you can never reach that of the object you contemplate. For a dull or careleſs or wrong directed application will find no-

thing but lumpiſh load, or, at moſt, deluſive blaze in whatever it falls upon. Hence it appears, there are two ſpirits to be conſidered, that of the learner, and that of the teacher, the former preparative for reception of the other. Therefore St John bids us try the ſpirits; becauſe they being the leading principles, whoever gives heed to thoſe of a wrong turn will be miſled, which is worſe than no guidance at all.

2 The ſpirit of oppoſition and cavil is leaſt likely of any to carry a man beyond the letter, to which it pertinaciouſly adheres for that very reaſon becauſe it is killing: or if it ever attempt to ſtrike out a latent meaning, it finds one that is the moſt exceptionable becauſe affording the moſt ample matter for cenſure and ridicule.

The ſpirit of prejudice and prepoſſeſſion, though not quite ſo pernicious as the former, ſerves as little to profit by: for it will admit of no improvement upon what it had brought from its own fund, but rather, like a mortification, turns the ſoundeſt parts into its own likeneſs. When a man has ſtrongly imbibed the tenets of a ſect, or eſpouſed ſome particular notions of his own, he proceeds thenceforward with a ſpirit of zeal rather than improvement: he ſearches the Scriptures, not to learn by them, but to hunt for detached texts in ſupport of his opinions. He forms a compoſition wherein ſeveral Scripture terms are repeatedly introduced without any accurate meaning, or apt connection

in the places they are made to occupy, and then by help of a Concordance finds out all the paſſages wherein thoſe terms occur, to be produced as divine authorities for his coarſe-wrought texture.

There is likewiſe a ſpirit of vanity, which often mingles among the two foregoing, and ſometimes operates alone. The ſcoffer and caviller moves as much by impulſe of vanity as croſſneſs: the credit of ſhrewdneſs, and ſmartneſs of overthrowing great authorities and debaſing revered characters, works powerfully upon ſome tempers; and good nature may more willingly admit this for the general root of oppoſition, becauſe being a leſs blameable principle than meer rancour and reſentment. In the zealot his prepoſſeſſion ſeems to be the firſt ſpring of motion, but quickly leads him into an opinion of excelling, of conceiting himſelf the ſole ſure interpreter of the ſacred writings, pitying the bulk of mankind as deluded carnal-minded creatures, and even aſcribing the preſervation and proſperity of the nation more to himſelf, and his aſſociates in the ſame way of thinking, than to our Counſellors and Senators, our Generals and Admirals: for what avails the wiſdom of the wiſe, the valour of the brave, or ſtrength of the mighty, without the bleſſing of Heaven? which bleſſing is drawn down by the pious breathings of a few true believers perſevering in their uprightneſs amidſt a ſinful and corrupt generation;

neration; ſo that our Sodom is ſaved for the ſake of ten righteous perſons happily found therein. Yet vanity will maintain her ground without either captiouſneſs or prior engagement to ſupport her. An ingenious expoſition or plauſible conſtruction that nobody has hit upon before, will often beguile the moſt impartial enquirer to wander out of the way, and ſtop his ears againſt all remonſtrances urged to bring him back again: for there is a ſhame in retracting an opinion one has once ſtrongly given courſe to, and this will work unperceived even by the party under its influence. I have already remarked in my Chapter upon that article, that vanity will find means upon ſome particular occaſions to inſinuate itſelf into perſons who are in general of an humble and rather diffident diſpoſition; that none can be too vigilant againſt its attacks, becauſe none can be ſecure againſt having them made upon him in the moſt covert manner.

Another ſpirit is that of novelty, which entices by the meer pleaſure of making diſcoveries, without any reflection on their being the produce of an extraordinary penetration, or any compariſon with the overſights of others. The knowledge of any truth apprehended uſeful is ſweet to the mind, and our eagerneſs to taſte this ſweetneſs makes us entertain a perſuaſion of our knowing a thing before we really do know it. Therefore it is dangerous to paſs a judge-

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ment upon a new diſcovery while it is a new one, and until time ſhall have abated the ſweetneſs of novelty, and given ſcope for reflection to flow in from different quarters.

3. Beſides theſe there is a Spirit of terror and anxiety, and a ſpirit of enthuſiaſm, which though of oppoſite qualities, the one being flegmatic and diffident, the other fiery and preſumptuous, nevertheleſs often unite in the ſame perſon. The firſt of theſe repreſents every perſuaſion of a divine truth as ſacred, and every error or ignorance as the ſin of infidelity. Whomſoever this ſpirit poſſeſſes, he is obliged under pain of damnation to find evidences in the ſacred records of what he has eſteemed a ſacred truth; and that inſtantly without heſitation; nor may he ſuffer his thoughts to ſuggeſt for a moment a conſtruction of any text however obvious and natural, that ſeems to raiſe a doubt againſt it: for to diſbelieve or even doubt the word of God would be the moſt attrocious offence againſt his Glory. So he proceeds under a perpetual dread and trepidation leſt he ſhould miſtake or harbour any miſtruſt: not being able to diſtinguiſh that it is one thing to doubt whether the word of God be true, and quite another to doubt whether ſome particular article be the true ſenſe of that word. But without the latter doubt, there is no room for deliberation: for when you are clear on one ſide of the queſtion, what have you to deliberate upon? Every ſearching the Scriptures implies

plies a miſtruſt that our knowledge may not yet be compleat, and a decent confidence that we may get information by an honeſt exerciſe of our judgement upon them. But a fearful awe and hurrying ſolicitude muſt needs cramp the mind, not giving free ſcope for the balance of judgement to play, nor the weights to enter the ſcale; ſo that it can never make a freſh deciſion either for improvement of knowledge, or rectifying of miſtakes. The caſe is the ſame in the moſt common matters: if a man going to examine a taylor's bill, ſhould have a piſtol holden over him, and be threatened with being ſhot through the head if he did not caſt it up exactly right in three minutes, he would be able to make no uſe of his arithmetic, in ſuch a ſituation. Therefore the timid enquirer may indeed be ſecure againſt loſing ſuch knowledge as he happens to have, but if he lie under any miſapprehenſions, (as what mortal man is exempt from them?) it is impoſſible he ſhould ever be cured.

The ſpirit of enthuſiaſm is no leſs averſe to doubt and deliberation, which appear ſuperfluous; for it proceeds wholly by impulſe and intuition. It poſſeſſes with the notion of a ſupernatural power and illumination accompanying the ſanctified, which diſplays to him objects in their true ſhapes and colours, that never could have been diſcovered by the exerciſe of the natural faculties. So he has no uſe for his underſtanding,

ſtanding, but only for his eyes, to carry him along the ſeveral ſpots whereon the light within him from time to time ſhall ſtrike. This ſpirit naturally introduces that of prejudice and prepoſſeſſion; and its miſguidings are harder to be rectified than thoſe of any the before mentioned. For being known only by the ſtrength of glare it caſts, whatever ſtrikes ſtrongly upon the fancy, or is rivetted therein by continual harangues chimed always in the ſame ſtrain, is taken for a ſupernatural light: and if any body offers to examine or reaſon upon it, he is rejected without hearing; for all human reaſoning gives marks of a carnal man, who cannot know the things of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

None of theſe ſpirits appear at all likely to reach the vivifying principle wanted: for either they ſtick at the dead letter, or extract ſomething from it equally deadly with the letter itſelf. But the moſt ſerious and ſincere being liable to fall, more or leſs, under the influence of any of them, except the firſt, it ſeemed expedient to take notice of the various dangers ſurrounding on all quarters, that we may know what to guard againſt.

4. For if we can keep clear off their miſguidings, we ſhall more readily imbibe the proper ſpirit of a learner, which is that of meekneſs and ſobriety, of calm conſideration, attentive induſtry,

induſtry, and the docility of children; for of ſuch we are told is the kingdom of heaven. I do not apprehend it underſtuod that we are to come with the ignorance, but with the ſimplicity and inquiſitiveneſs of children: for he that cometh to God muſt firſt believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him; ſo that ſome previous knowledge is neceſſary for the learner to bring with him. But he muſt put on a diſpoſition to receive whatever ſhall be taught him, in the genuine ſenſe intended to be conveyed: he may laudably uſe his old knowledge for the quicker apprehenſion of what is taught, but muſt ſo far lay all his old opinions dormant, as that they may not obſtruct its reception.

Here I muſt expect the freethinker will reclaim loudly againſt me as a reviver of popiſh tyranny over the thoughts, an abetter of implicit faith; who would ſuffer nobody to uſe his eyes or judge for himſelf, but would have him ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of his leaders, and ſwallow any thing poured into his mouth with the credulity and eagerneſs of children. This clamour I ſhall endeavour to quiet by obſerving that it takes riſe from the very miſtake I have been complaining of, namely, that of ſticking at the ſurface of the letter without penetrating into the ſpirit of what I recommend. It is apparent throughout this Volume, that I have proceeded in the ſpirit of a neu-

a neutral, not undertaking to demonſtrate the truth of Chriſtianity; for this I leave to Divines, who are better verſed in the external evidence and hiſtory; but ſtriving to examine what it is, to compare it with the dictates of human reaſon, in order to diſcover what conformity may be found, and what reconcilement effected between them. I would have every man judge for himſelf, but not paſs his judgement until after full cogniſance of the cauſe: while taking this cogniſance, he cannot do better than aſſume the openneſs and indifference of a child; when he has examined the internal evidence, and become maſter of the caſe; then let him reſume the man together with his former opinions, contraſting them therewith, provided he has taken care to build them upon ſolid rational foundations; and he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be from God.

And I muſt obſerve to the freethinker that he has already practiſed more of the child than I deſire of him: for he took his idea of Religion from what he learnt of his nurſe while literally a child, and now paſſes his judgement upon her anile repreſentation. Whereas he may pleaſe to remember I recommended the docility, not the ignorance of children: therefore wiſh him to ſtudy the cauſe afreſh, now that he has acquired knowledge of other kinds and improved his faculties by practice; laying aſide the old woman, and having recourſe to the written word with the

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aid of Mr Locke, and other learned expoſitors. If I adviſe a ſuſpenſion of all old opinions which might obſtruct his progreſs, it is agreeably to the golden rule of doing as one would be done by, being no more than what I practiſe myſelf in the peruſal of any ſyſtem whereof I have previouſly heard either a good or bad account. When taking Lucretius in hand, I enter into his ideas of rough and ſmooth, hooked, ſharp, ſquare and multangular atoms, their uncertain declinations, and eſſential gravity, though contrary to my own perſuaſions; for elſe I could not expect to underſtand his plan, nor judge of its conſtruction. The ſame thing I apprehend done by our judges upon a trial: if they have taken any impreſſions from reports without doors, they caſt them aſide, and during the hearing attend ſolely to the depoſitions of witneſſes, and arguments of counſel on both ſides; forming their judgement afterwards upon the lights gathered from thence.

Having thus vented my thoughts upon the ſpirit of the learner, they lead naturally to conſider that of the teacher, the main ſcope and end aimed at by the doctrine, together with the means and manner employed in purſuing it: whereon I ſhall offer my general idea without accumulating texts in ſupport of every particular contained therein, which indeed I cannot readily recollect, and might be tedious and perplexing

plexing to the Reader; who without my ſuggeſting will be able to apply ſuch as may be needful, from his own remembrance, and likewiſe to judge whether this idea in any part of it be contradictory to reaſon, and his experience of human nature.

5. The very terms, Salvation and Redemption, conſtantly employed to expreſs the end propoſed in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, direct us to regard it as a deliverance from ſome evil that mankind laboured under: which evil is repreſented to have been brought upon the human race by the lapſe of Adam, and is called Death. For man was created perfect, having acceſs to the tree of life which would have made him immortal; until upon the firſt act of diſobedience his nature was debaſed, himſelf baniſhed from the tree of life, and laid under the curſe; Duſt thou art, and to duſt ſhalt thou return. Which curſe was taken off by the ſacrifice of Chriſt, who was made a curſe for him: and thus as in Adam all died, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

I ſee no ground to apprehend that death was a direct and phyſical effect of the forbidden fruit, which contained ſuch poiſonous qualities as to render the bodies of Adam, and all his deſcendants periſhable and mortal, or that a miraculous alteration was inſtantly worked in them by the divine Power: But that there was one ſtep intervening between the act of tranſ-

greſſing and death. For that introduced ſin, and death entered by ſin, being the wages and natural conſequence thereof.

It occurs next to enquire what is to be underſtood by Death: the common literal acceptation, denoting a ſeparation of ſoul from body on ceaſing of the vital functions, cannot be admitted, as being incompatible both with reaſon and Scripture. For the denunciation, In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die, was not literally fulfilled; becauſe Adam did not die in the day that he ate. Neither is it conceiveable, that death ſhould be the wages of ſin, or that if Man had never fallen he would have lived for ever: for this ſuppoſition will not ſtand with the contemplation of the frame and nature of the human body nor conſtitution of the earth, which is not contrived commodiouſly to lodge and maintain all thoſe multitudes which have been, and are likely to be born into it; beſides being in its own nature periſhable ſo as to become ſome time or other incapable of affording any habitation at all.

Death upon the preſent occaſion, muſt be conſidered as an evil; for if it were not, as the denunciation of it would be no threat, ſo the deliverance from it would be no Redemption. But the bare ſeparation of ſoul and body, or decay and corruption of the latter, is not acknowledged an evil either in Philoſophy or Religion: let us then reflect what it is that makes

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it ſo. And this we ſhall find to be, the uncertainty of what condition it may throw us into, the apprehenſion of ſomething dreadful to enſue, and the opinion that it will cut us off from all our delights and enjoyments whatſoever, and all means of engagement in the exerciſes of our activity. Without theſe concomitants death were not death: it would be nothing different from ſleep, which we never look upon as an evil.

6. Therefore death was made what it is, namely an object of terror, by ſin; for Adam in his native ſimplicity of innocence was ſo far from fear, that he wanted even proper caution; but ſhame and fear entered upon the tranſgreſſion. Then death began to be death, or an evil, and he firſt found himſelf obnoxious to it. But the tranſgreſſion, or rather proneneſs of human nature to fall into it, was manifeſted by the prohibition; agreeably to St Paul's Argument in Rom. vii. I had not known ſin but by the law, for I once was alive without the law, but when the commandment came, ſin took occaſion thereby to deceive me, and ſlew me: ſo that in St Paul's ſenſe of the words, it was true, that Adam did die in the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit. And for the doctrine of original ſin, or extending the conſequences of Adam's diſobedience to his whole poſterity, I have already delivered my thoughts of it in the

Chapter on Redemption, tending to ſhow, that his offence was not operative upon the conſtitution of his deſcendants, but declarative of human nature, like an aſſay made upon a little bit in a parcel of reputed gold, which being found to be baſe metal, muſt prove a condemnation of the whole maſs.

If this expoſition be thought admiſſible, it will become needleſs to enter into the diſputes that have been raiſed by Dr Middleton and others upon the hiſtory of the fall: for be it a narrative of real facts, or be it an allegorical deſcription of human nature, the doctrine learned from it will turn out the ſame, which likewiſe ſtands confirmed by experience. We all eſteem children in a ſtate of innocence, as not having ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion; and we find them not afraid of death, for indeed they know not what it is. But when they have begun to diſcern right and wrong, are conſcious of miſbehaviour which has drawn puniſhment and miſchiefs upon them, have contracted a fondneſs for the pleaſures, been made acquainted with the evils of life, and imbibed the apprehenſions of perſons around them; then death aſſumes its ghaſtly form, and becomes an object of terror and diſmay.

Should we take Adam in his uprightneſs for a repreſentation of innocent childhood, we muſt imagine him as little apprehenſive of death as

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that: he had heard it denounced as a thing to be avoided, but he knew not what hurt and evil were, having had no experience of them; for our ideas of reflection are only repetitions of ſome ſenſation we had experienced before. So he could feel no diſturbance in the thoughts of death, of the evil whereof he had no conception: the moſt he could apprehend from it was a deprivation of the pleaſures he enjoyed, but this though undeſirable, was not terrible.

But this tranquillity and indifference of mind was no more than an inſenſibility or exemption from fear, ſpringing from an unconcernedneſs for the future; which we may preſume he would not long have remained under. Could he, and thoſe of his deſcendants whom he lived to ſee, have eſcaped all attacks of temptation, we cannot but ſuppoſe they would have improved their faculties to the utmoſt, and attained all the knowledge that was to be attained thereby. If they had ſeen no premature deaths among them, yet they muſt have found upon contemplation of their bodily frame, and of the garden where they dwelt, that neither of them were conſtructed to laſt for ever. They would have known ſo much of death, as that it was a diſſolution of the human compoſition: but ſtill not known, that it was death, that is, an evil abhorrent to the thought; but rather regarded it as an admonition to examine what might be likely to come after. They then would have

put forth their hands and have taken of the tree of life, and lived for ever.

7. I believe that tree was never ſuſpected of bearing fruit whoſe juices ſhould prove an Elixir vitæ, efficacious to cement the union between ſoul and body ſo ſtrongly as that it ſhould never be diſſolved: therefore we muſt underſtand it as figurative of ſomething elſe, and what elſe can we ſuppoſe it to ſhadow forth, unleſs ſuch principles of ſound reaſoning, as, with due cultivation, would produce an aſſured expectation of enjoyment and happineſs after their diſſolution. They could not fail of diſcovering the unperiſhable nature of their ſpiritual part, which was themſelves, all elſe being an adjunct or covering, inſtrumental to their uſes, but no eſſential or conſtituent part of their perſons. And ſince we with our lapſed feeble underſtandings can diſcern much of the divine power and beneficence, we muſt allow them to do the ſame in a compleater, clearer, more ſatisfactory manner. The purity of their minds would ſuffer no groſs nor erroneous conceptions to mingle in their Religion, nor to throw obſtacles in the way of its progreſs: but would riſe to juſt ſentiments of their Maker, his almighty Power, his Intelligence, his Wiſdom, his all-comprehenſive Providence, his unlimited Goodneſs. They could have no ſuſpicion of any hurt ever to come from him, having experienced nothing but

but unceaſing Bounty. For it has been obſerved in the Chapter upon Goodneſs, that our ſenſe of that Attribute fluctuates according to the condition of our minds: our miſtruſts ariſe from the evils we ſee or feel, the miſchiefs occaſioned by our own miſcarriages or thoſe of other people, the melancholy gloom overſpreading our thoughts, and the taſteleſſneſs of every pleaſing reflection, generated thereby. When at eaſe and ſucceſsful in our wiſhes, we can readily ſee that God is good, and the world a glorious world. Therefore they would confide in the divine Goodneſs, to provide them another Garden, equally delightful, whenever removed from that of Eden. Their proſpect of pleaſurable modes of exiſtence following in endleſs ſucceſſion, would connect the whole in one unbroken line of duration: ſo that they would eſteem themſelves, not as we do, creatures of a few years, but poſſeſſed of a life to laſt for ever; regarding the diſſolution of their bodies as a paſſage from one ſcene of engagement into another. Juſt as a man in youth, health, vigour, eſteems himſelf in poſſeſſion of a long life, although he knows he ſhall be cut off from all his amuſements before to-morrow by the ſlumbers of the night.

But this ripeneſs of knowledge and firmneſs of faith, which would have put them in poſſeſſion of a life for ever, was never arrived at:

for they were fruits requiring the united endeavours of numbers to gather them, and the ſin of our firſt parents occaſioned their being driven out of reach before there was a third human creature to aſſiſt in climbing the tree. And the imbecillity of human nature, whereof that ſin was declarative, or as Middleton will have it figurative, is ſo manifeſt as to make it appear a romantic ſuppoſition that any race of men, however happily circumſtanced, ſhould attain ſuch a ſatisfaction and well-grounded aſſurance as I have juſt now deſcribed. Therefore we all conſider ourſelves as mortals, in the condition of perſons lying under an irrecoverable ſentence of death; who is to us the king of terrors, or at beſt an officer coming with a writ of execution to ſweep away all our poſſeſſions, our pleaſures, our inſtruments of action and every thing we deſire, or wherein we can find ſolace or employment.

Thus I apprehend it may be underſtood, how in Adam all have died; for life is not life without enjoyment, which cannot ſubſiſt with anxiety and continual alarms: wherefore the philoſophers laid down that no ſtate can be pronounced happy of whoſe continuance there is an uncertainty. From which uncertainty none but the perfect wiſe Wiſeman could be exempt; who being an ideal character no where actually found upon earth, the Stoics thence pronounced

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all men fools and mad, and conſequently unhappy; or as tranſlated into Scripture language, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.

8. This temporal death then, which we lie under during our animal life, muſt be meant by the declaration, In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt die. But if this be the Scripture ſenſe of the text, it is not the whole ſenſe. For the main tenor of the Goſpel, as all expoſitors unanimouſly agree, aims to warn us of another death conſequent upon that ſpecified above, namely, an eternal death, to commence upon diſſolution of the body: not an annihilation, nor perpetual inſenſibility, nor incapacity for all enjoyments of life: but a ſtate of actual miſery and ſuffering. Herein Philoſophy joins hands with Religion, repreſenting this life as a preparation for the next, declaring rectitude of ſentiment and conduct, called Righteouſneſs in ſacred ſtile, as the ſole and certain avenue to a future ſtate of bliſs; and acknowledging the depravity of human nature, which cannot riſe to that perfect wiſdom which alone can enſure a happy exit.

The Philoſopher indeed conſiders this depravity as an imperfection rather than a corruption. He thinks himſelf in a ſtate of childhood, born to greater things than he can now poſſeſs, his judgement not yet ripened, and his powers not compleatly formed: and if he can make

make a good uſe of thoſe allotted him, he confides in the goodneſs of God for having provided his laws of Nature reſpecting both worlds in ſuch manner, as that upon his emerſion from matter he ſhall find himſelf inveſted with larger faculties, and ſtronger abilities, capable of raiſing him to that perfection which he can never reach while in this corporeal impriſonment. For he dooms it incongruous with the divine Attributes, that any creature ſhould be placed in a ſituation which muſt lead unavoidably into miſery, without any wilful negligence of his own, and againſt his utmoſt endeavours to extricate himſelf.

But this imagination our holy Religion overthrows, concluding the whole human race under the dominion of ſin; from which no ſecond cauſes, of thoſe operating upon things viſible or inviſible, could reſcue them without almighty power interpoſing for their Redemption: for as in Adam all died, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive; nor is there any other name given upon earth whereby men may be ſaved.

9. But what ſhall we ſay to the comprehenſiveneſs of that expreſſion, All ſhall be made alive? Is it univerſally true that no man ſhall periſh? I wiſh with all my ſoul I could find a warrant to ſay this: but it is what the moſt glowing Chriſtian Charity dares not advance. Is it then, that all who are ſaved will be ſaved that way? or is it, that all without exception

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are put into a capacity of ſalvation, if they will embrace the terms offered for that purpoſe? The firſt of theſe conſtructions does little honour to the Chriſtian diſpenſation, as leaving a total uncertainty how far the benefits of it extend, giving men only a chance for their lives, for perhaps ſome may be ſaved thereby, and ſome may not. And the ſecond will not be found verified by experience of facts: for the terms propounded are Faith in the Meſſiah, but how many children die before being capable of ſuch Faith? how many pagan nations in ancient and modern ages never heard of a Meſſiah? Nor ſhall we ever be able to ſatisfy gainſayers, tha it is conſiſtent with divine Juſtice to permit multitudes to be born, and die, without ever opening the door to them through which alone they can eſcape eternal death. Beſides the contraſt and compariſon with the death by Adam, which was undoubtedly univerſal, affixes the ſame ſenſe to the life by Chriſt.

In order to clear up theſe difficulties it ſeems the moſt rational expoſition to underſtand All collectively of the human race, not diſtributively of every individual compriſed therein: ſo that it might be neceſſary, Chriſtianity ſhould prevail in the world, yet not neceſſary for every ſingle perſon in the world to be Chriſtian. Becauſe if I am right in the general intereſt explained in my Chapter on divine Oeconomy, perfection once introduced among mankind in gene-

general, will in due time work perfection in the particular members; thoſe who were true Chriſtians gradually infuſing the viviſying principle by ſympathy and mutual intercourſe into the reſt of the ſpecies.

But if it be judged orthodox to believe no ſingle ſoul can be ſaved without actual faith in Chriſt, I have ſuggeſted reaſons in the Chapter on Redemption tending to prove that thoſe who have had no opportunities afforded them here, may find them in another life. In ſupport of which idea I have drawn arguments from that almoſt diſcarded article in the principal of our Creeds, He deſcended into Hades; from whence it may be inferred that there is a Chriſtian Religion there, as well as upon earth. And at the ſame time have endeavoured to remove all handle that might be taken therefrom to encourage indifference and procraſtination, by ſhewing that nevertheleſs ſuch, to whom the terms of ſalvation have been fairly propounded, but rejected or neglected by them, can have no glimpſe of probable ground to expect a ſecond offer in their next ſtage of Being.

10. Before proceeding farther it will be expedient to remark, that life is not given directly by the hand of Chriſt, but he gives it becauſe he gives that upon which it will follow of courſe: as a poor man may ſay his victuals and cloathing are given him by one who has furniſhed him with money to procure them. And herein

herein the compariſon continues between Chriſt and Adam: for though we are taught in one place, that in Adam all die, this is explained by another text which declares, that ſin entered by Adam, and death by ſin: in like manner are we warranted to ſay that righteouſneſs entered by Chriſt, and life by righteouſneſs. For as death is the wages, or natural conſequence of ſin; ſo is life the wages of righteouſneſs, the fruit it will naturally produce without farther divine interpoſition than was needful for planting and watering the tree.

Thus we ſee the deliverance it behoves us to lay hold of is a deliverance from that ſin which entered by Adam, or rather that ſinfulneſs of our nature which was manifeſted by his diſobedience: which therefore was a prejudication of all who ſhould partake of that nature, although they had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of his tranſgreſſion. It remains to conſider wherein this ſinfulneſs or promptitude to do wrong conſiſts: and we ſhall find it to lie in the prevalence of our appetites and paſſions over our judgement, or a thraldom of the Will.

I ſhall not repeat the metaphyſical diſquiſitions upon Volition purſued in the Chapter on Freewill: I need only to call to remembrance what has been ſaid there concerning the determination of our judgement being ordinarily taken for our Will, and that Liberty, in the moſt common acceptation, is underſtood of

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ſuch a ſituation wherein there is no obſtacle to prevent that Will from taking effect. For what we judge expedient we reſolve to do, and think we ſhall do it: but our imbecility is ſuch that deſires and fancies ſtart up too ſtrong for our reſolves, and carry us into a directly contrary conduct. This ſtate of the carnal man is deſcribed by St Paul, Rom. vii. I allow not that which I do: for what I would, that do I not: but what I would not, that do I. I ſee another law in my members rebelling againſt the law of my mind, and leading me captive unto the law of ſin.

The very eſſence of ſin preſuppoſes this ſtruggle between the rational and ſenſitive faculties, ſtiled by St Paul the law of his mind and law of his members. Children do many things before arriving at the uſe of reaſon for which we are forced to reprimand them, but theſe are not ſins becauſe they know no better: it is their diſcernment of what is right, or having a law of their minds, that renders the continuance of thoſe practices ſinful. Thus the ſame St Paul obſerves that he had not known ſin unleſs by the law, for without the law ſin was dead, but when the commandment came, ſin firſt gave ſigns of life.

11. This vigour and untameable violence of the ſenſitive faculties perpetually confines our views to objects of ſenſe, to narrow aims, and gratifications of appetite, or worldly deſires; cramp-

cramping the underſtanding ſo that it cannot open wide enough to take in a comprehenſive view of Nature, nor penetrate to the origin and Author of Nature; but lies liable to be continually overclouded with ſtuperſtitions, or miſapprehenſions of the divine Nature and Attributes. Chriſt has declared that bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God: bleſſed are the peace makers; for they ſhall be called the children of God. Whereby ſeems neceſſarily implied that, while impure or contentious, no man can ſee or be truly called the child of God, that is, poſſeſs juſt ſentiments and proper affections with regard to him; which in other paſſages is expreſſed by entering the kingdom of heaven, coming to the Father, loving him with all the heart, being one with him, and doing his Will.

Neither were the judicious among the pagans inſenſible of this truth, that purity and holineſs were neceſſary to the right underſtanding of things inviſible. Wherefore they exhorted to purge the mental eye from all films contracted by conſtant attention to ſenſual objects, to refine the ſoul by the ſtudy and practice of philoſophy: they recommended a total apathy, that is, an exemption from paſſion and all inordinate deſires or averſions, as indiſpenſibly requiſite to compleat the perfection of Wiſdom; and hold that ſuch ſouls as had not been ſo refined, would

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upon quitting their bodies, ſtill have many carnal particles adhering to them, which muſt weigh them down to greater depths of wretchedneſs than they had ever ſunk into during their abode upon earth.

12. We have now diſcovered what is the evil from which we are offered deliverance by the Redemption, namely, that weakneſs and conſequent darkneſs of the Will or underſtanding, which ſubjects it to the tyranny of appetite, and renders the ſoul incapable of reſiſting the impulſes of that foulneſs worked thereinto from the groſs corporeal frame whereto we are vitally united. The Philoſopher may build what hypotheſes he pleaſes for getting rid of the foulneſs. He may ſay, that Nature has provided future puniſhments for purgation of contaminated ſouls: that as none paſs out of life without a degree of impunity, all without exception muſt undergo ſome courſe of diſcipline ſuited to their reſpective complaints: ſome to be hung in the winds for ſweetning, ſome plunged into rapid waters, to waſh away their filth; from others the droſs ſhall be burnt out by ſcorching flames. It is not my buſineſs to conteſt the point with him, for I have not undertaken the office of a champion for our Religion to overthrow all opponents; but have propoſed only to enquire fairly and particularly what are the doctrines it teaches: and I think nobody can deny

deny it to be one, that there was no proviſion of ſecond cauſes ſufficient to work the deliverance of human nature, but that it was effected by almighty Power interpoſing for that purpoſe.

Here it is likely I ſhall be ſtopped in my career with an objection of the freethinker, that it is highly blaſphemous and injurious to the divine Wiſdom to imagine, that God ſhould have contrived his order of ſecond cauſes ſo unſkilfully as that a whole ſpecies of his creatures muſt be for ever miſerable, unleſs he interfered with his own hand to correct the defects in his original plan. Upon which I ſhall obſerve, that his objection ſtrikes beſide the mark, being not levelled at the Chriſtian faith, but the notions of it imbibed from the nurſery: where the fall of Man may have been looked upon as an unexpected event for which God in his infinite mercy afterwards provided a remedy to cure an evil he had not intended ſhould befal. Whereas if the objector had gone a few ſteps out of the nurſery to fetch his Teſtament, he might have found there, that the method of Redemption was contained in the eternal purpoſe of God, and conſequently the depravity of our Nature, which it was provided to rectify, was eternally foreſeen.

Or if he have an invincible averſeneſs againſt all ſupernatural interpoſition whatever, I have ſhewn him in the Chapter on Oeconomy what

grounds he has in hiſtory and experience to regard the Patriarchal, the Jewiſh, and the Chriſtian diſpenſations, as a ſeries of incidents ſignally providential: having made appear before in my Chapter on things Providential, that an event ought to be ranked among them which was produced by an extraordinary concurrence of cauſes, and attended with extenſive and beneficial conſequences.

13. But this repreſentation of the Chriſtian Faith being introduced by natural operation of a chain of ſecond cauſes, proceeded from a deſire of being as comprehenſive as I could, ſo as to bring perſons to entertain a favourable opinion, and make their proper uſes of it, who could not digeſt all its articles. Which ſcheme we muſt now lay aſide, being incompatible with the whole tenor and ſpirit of the ſacred writings, the ſubject of our preſent enquiry: for they refer every where to an almighty Power interpoſing miraculouſly to reſcue Mankind from an evil, abſolutely inevitable and irremediable by the laws of Nature or any operation of ſecond cauſes.

Now in order to maintain the character I have aſſumed in this Volume of a reconciler between Religion and Reaſon, although I cannot pretend to prove with ſome eminent Divines, that the latter conducts to the neceſſity of ſuch interpoſition, yet ſhall attempt to ſhew that it carries no repugnance thereto, nor exhibits any thing

thing that ſhould render it incredible: and for that purpoſe ſhall recur to ſome diſcoveries already ſtricken out by the light of Nature, to take for my foundation.

Whoever will turn back to my Chapter on Providence will find exhibited there ſo large an idea of the Divine Intelligence as to make it conceivable, that God might have finiſhed his Creation from all eternity, and reſted from his works ever ſince: having once for all formed ſo perfect a plan and eſtabliſhed ſo compleat a ſyſtem of univerſal Nature, as that it ſhould run on for ever without needing any farther touch of his hand; the cauſes of generation being adapted to thoſe of corruption, and proviſion being made by the activity given his ſpiritual creatures for continually repairing thoſe immenſe decays of motion, occaſioned by the mutual impulſes and reſiſtance of his inanimate or material creatures.

Neverthelefs it is not incongruous with our ideas of him, that he ſhould have acted otherwiſe, and conſtructed his plan of Nature incompleat, not for want of ſkill or ability to do better, but purpoſely to leave room for interpoſitions of his almighty Power, and manifeſt himſelf in his character of Governor to his intelligent creatures. And for the probability of his ſo doing I have ſuggeſted arguments in § 10, 11, of the ſame Chapter: and in the following ſections have drawn proofs from the contempla-

tion of this Earth we inhabit, and of the planetary ſyſtem, that he muſt have actually interpoſed in the formation, or as vulgarly called, the creation of this viſible world. I have not indeed been able by the light of Nature to diſcover evidence of the like interpoſition in the moral world, yet the rules of analogy direct us to infer a probability of it from the manifeſt tendency of this ſublunary ſyſtem to Chaos and confuſion, and remove all repugnance of reaſon againſt receiving that article from Revelation.

14. Add farther that experience teſtifies there is a mixture of evil, as well moral as phyſical, in the world: from whence Reaſon concludes there is a neceſſity it ſhould be ſo in the Nature of things as eſtabliſhed on their original creation, evil having therein been made productive of good, and indiſpenſibly requiſite to ſupport and maintain that fund of happineſs abounding throughout the Univerſe. Reaſon indeed gathers from contemplation of the divine Attributes, that the good exceeds the evil in an immenſe proportion, and conſides that there are many forms of Being, among the whole hoſt of perceptive creatures totally exempt from the latter. Nevertheleſs if there muſt be evil, there muſt be ſome ſpecies of creatures obnoxious to it; and nothing hinders that this ſhould be Man rather than any other ſpecies you can imagine. Neither can we feel a repugnance againſt the ſuppoſition that Man came forth from the hands

of

of his Maker without any taint of evil upon him, but was made liable to receive it from the influence of material or other agents: and that a remedy was provided to reſcue him from ſuch evil as ſoon as the purpoſes, whatever they be, whereto it was neceſſary were anſwered.

Now whether proviſion be made of ſuch remedy by natural or ſupernatural means, it equally obviates all impeachment of the Divine Goodneſs and Equity. For if a parent ſends his ſon to ſtay a conſiderable time abroad, we expect he ſhould furniſh him with remittances ſufficient to ſubſiſt him the whole time: but if he knew he intended to go over himſelf before it was lapſed, though he did not ſet him out at firſt with full ſubſiſtance, we ſhould not ſuſpect him deficient either in forecaſt or kindneſs.

Agreeably to theſe deciſions of reaſon we ſee the Scriptures repreſenting Man as originally placed in a ſtate of happineſs, to continue while nothing external interfered to diſturb it, but with an imbecillity, evidenced by Adam's tranſgreſſion, incapable of reſiſting the firſt temptation that ſhould accoſt him: that by repeated offence he contracted a depravity which would continually grow worſe and worſe, until it plunged him into the loweſt depths of miſery, nor could any ſkill or endeavours of his own prevent the miſchief, neither was there any proviſion of ſecond cauſes that could aſſiſt him.

Nevertheleſs God in his eternal purpoſe had provided a remedy for reſtoring him to his primitive condition, and ſupplying him with a vigour that ſhould be proof againſt all attacks.

Little doubt can be made that the interpoſition here ſpoken of muſt be underſtood only of the Incarnation and occaſional effuſions of the Holy Ghoſt. I do not forget that the miracles and prophecies recorded in both Teſtaments are parts of the Chriſtian belief: but miracle, as I have obſerved in the Chapter upon that article, is a particular ſpecies of ſupernatural operations. Thoſe who hold the ſouls of children created from time to time as there is a fetus ready to receive them, or that there is an interpoſing Providence continually watching over and correcting the errors of chance and freewill, muſt aſcribe theſe events to an immediate operation of almighty Power, yet never call them miraculous becauſe they are neceſſary for carrying on the order and courſes of Nature.

Whereas miracles are not wanted for neceſſary uſes of their own, but as evidences, ſtriking to the ſenſe, of ſomething more important to be manifeſted by them. Therefore we muſt confine the deliverance of mankind from its ſtate of imbecillity and wretchedneſs to the two cauſes ſpecified above.

Thoſe two articles depend upon the Trinity, which is counted the profoundeſt of myſteries: but a myſtery ceaſes to be ſuch as ſoon as revealed,

vealed, that is, underſtood. For St Paul ſpeaks of the Chriſtian faith as a myſtery, becauſe it remained ſuch to the Jews, being ſhadowed to them in types and figures, which lead them to the expectation of a temporal monarch coming with power to make the conqueſt of the world, but at the ſame time poor and mean, a man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief: which things appeared contradictory, and conſequently myſterious. But when it was revealed that Jeſus was the Meſſiah predicted, who worked out deliverance, not by earthly power and dominion, but by a life of righteouſneſs terminating in a voluntary death, this was a plain propoſition intelligible to the meaneſt capacities; even thoſe who do not believe it true, yet clearly underſtand what is contained in the aſſertion.

So the confuſedneſs of our ideas concerning ſubſtantial identity and union, involves us in myſtery and contradiction. We apprehend that one individual ſubſtance may be ſplit into many, and that ſeveral united together may produce a new ſubſtance of a compound never in Being before: which perpetually carries us counter to the admonition of our doctors againſt either dividing the Subſtance or confounding the Perſons. I have already done my endeavours towards preventing thoſe miſtakes, in my Chapter on the Trinity, and need only obſerve here, what nobody can deny to be the orthodox doctrine of our Church, that it was the ſame indi-

viſible almighty Being who governs all Nature as alſo the affairs of men by his ordinary and extraordinary Providence, who took upon him `Nature by a union with the human ſoul and body of Jeſus, and who works occaſionally upon our hearts to will and to do according to his good pleaſure. That he did not thereby become three different Beings or Subſtances having tranſactions with one another, but aſſumed the appearance of three Perſons or Characters, each having a ſeparate office and diſtinct province of action.

16. Let us now try to ſettle the proper conception of Union, which is not a tranſubſtantiation, nor conſubſtantiation extending throughout the ſame portion of ſpace, nor yet the addition of a new ſubſtance to thoſe entering the compound; but when things are ſo mingled together that we cannot diſtinguiſh them aſunder, and ſo joined for a continuance as that we never ſee them ſeparated again.

Which uninterrupted continuance of coaleſcence I apprehend characterizes the ſecond Perſon in diſtinction from the third: the office of the one being to unite with the ſubject indiſſolubly; of the other, to accede for ſmall ſpaces from time to time to different ſubjects as occaſion ſhall require and in ſuch ſecret manner as that, if I am right in my idea, we can never know, when the acceſs was actually made.

That

That there is a ſimilitude of operation between them ſtands likewiſe evidenced by the ſtile and language of Scripture. The figurative expreſſions of oil and anointing are applied equally to the effects produced by both. The reception of Grace by the Holy Ghoſt is termed a Chriſm, or anointing: and the characteriſtic appellation of the united God and Man is that of the Meſſiah, that is, the chriſmed or anointed. Jeſus is ſaid to have been conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, to grow in Grace, and to have the Spirit deſcend upon him at Jordan.

Neither is the term Uniting, or other expreſſion of ſimilar import, withholden from the regenerate Chriſtian, of whom it is ſaid the Father ſhall come unto him and make his abode with him and dwell in him, and that he ſhall receive power to be one of the ſons of God.

From all which may be gathered that the application of the Deity to every ſanctified believer was the ſame in kind with that to Jeſus; but immenſely inferior in degree, and temporary, with large intervals of diſunion between. So that when we act under influence of the Spirit, ſtill our acts have a mixture of imperfection; and in far the greater part of our acts we offend daily, being left to ourſelves without any aſſiſtance, whereas Jeſus being ſtiled the holy child, we muſt conclude, that holineſs accompanied him conſtantly and uninterruptedly from the cradle to the croſs.

This

This interpretation ſteers clear of ſeveral heretical notions broached in former times: as that Jeſus was a phantom, having no material body nor rational ſoul, but being an appearance exhibited to the ſenſes by the divine agency impreſſing ideas of various actions and diſcourſes paſſing before them: or that he was a meer man, and the Divinity within him nothing more than a power or virtue, like that which in lower degree reſted upon Moſes and Elijah. As likewiſe the Arian opinion, that he was a Being of higher order than the Angels, ſingular in his kind, created with extraordinary power and intelligence ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſes of the Redemption. For by the account above ſtated of the Chriſtian Doctrine it appears, that Jeſus was a real man, like unto us in all reſpects, ſin only excepted: that the Divinity united to him, which together with his human ſoul and body compoſed one Chriſt, was the Supreme Being ſubſtantially and inſeparably preſent with him, ſupplying all imperfections in the created parts, And that human Nature was ſo far loſt in corruption and weakneſs, that no created power in the Univerſe, nor any thing leſs than an immediate interpoſition of Omnipotence, could ſuffice to deliver it.

17. From hence we may learn what were the immediate effects of the union upon the ſoul of Jeſus: for we have no warrant to pronounce it produced any upon his body, being told that he

was in human infirmity and in all other things like unto us, ſin only excepted. Even the Reſurrection was not a conſequence of the union, being the work of God in his Paternal, not his Filial character: nor yet the Aſcenſion, for he did not fly, but was taken up into heaven. Which reſtriction of the difference between him and other men ſolely to an exemption from ſin, as cited juſt now, together with the ſimilitude in the operation of the Holy Spirit pointed out before, directs us to underſtand, that the union did not produce any extraordinary intelligence or knowledge or enlargement of the faculties, but a continual ſupply of force to what St Paul calls the law of his mind above the law of his members: ſo that his judgement was never perverted to decide amiſs, nor was he in any ſingle inſtance turned aſide from his reſolution by the temptations of pleaſure, danger, or pain.

So the purpoſe and effect of the union was to rectify the ſinful nature of Jeſus; for that he did partake of a ſinful nature by his birth from the woman, I ſee no reaſon nor ſcruple to doubt. Some I know have been carried by an inconſiderate and haſty zeal for the honour of their Saviour, to inſiſt that his ſoul was originally pure and perfect beyond that of all other men: but zeal operates very variouſly in different ſubjects. For my part I muſt acknowledge that my zeal for the glory of God gives me a bias to imagine him leſs perfect than

than the reſt of Adam's race: for I have ſo high an idea of the divine Power as to believe it capable of ſanctifying the moſt abandoned profligate ſoul that ever inhabited a human body; therefore if I could admit the doctrine of an intrinſic difference in ſouls, ſhould ſtand perſuaded, that God had choſen to unite himſelf with the very worſt of the whole ſpecies, in order to manifeſt his Power the more fully.

But as I happen to have found no evidence of any ſuch difference in my obſervations upon human nature, but that all ſouls are originally alike until corrupted in various degrees by vicious courſes; it follows neceſſarily that the ſoul of Jeſus was in itſelf neither better nor worſe than our own. He was a deſcendant of Adam, and when it is declared that in Adam all have ſinned, no exception is made of him: nor is this contradictory to the poſition of his being without ſin. For that relates to the commiſſion of actual ſin, which we ourſelves were not guilty of in Adam: for none of us were accomplices in the fact of his tranſgreſſion. Therefore when it is ſaid in Adam all have ſinned, we muſt neceſſarily underſtand thereby, as explained in the foregoing ſections, that all have partaken of a nature evidenced by the fall to be too weak and frail to ſtand againſt temptation; which nature the child Jeſus partook of, ſharing it in common with

with us. Nor are there marks left unrecorded by the Holy Spirit, in the circumſtances of the laſt agony, and other particulars pointed out in § 10, of my Chapter on the Trinity, which indicate a natural imbecillity and ſtruggle with the carnal law of the members riſing in rebellion againſt the law of the mind: which attacks of the enemy, together with the diſtreſs and ſufferings brought upon the champion of our cauſe, may be regarded as one completion of the prophecy, that the ſerpent ſhould bruiſe the heel which trampled upon its head.

The ſame obſervation may perſuade us that the human nature of Chriſt was not perfected inſtantly upon the firſt Incarnation: for as weakneſs is turned into corruption by repeated acts of ſinning, ſo it can be raiſed to invincible ſtrength only by repeated acts of righteouſneſs; nor was it purpoſed by an exertion of almighty power to remodel the conſtitution, but to meliorate it. Perhaps Adam might have repaired the damage of his fall by a ſubſequent unſining obedience; his nature being capable of a recovery, and even of improvement and melioration, by applying the proper means, had he been capable of making the application. But the Scripture repreſents it as impoſſible for him to do any good thing with his lapſed powers; and ſo indeed many Philoſophers allow that no man acts upon the ſole principle of rectitude: therefore all mankind had been loſt and undone for ever with-

without the coming of the Redeemer: In whom the Godhead conſtantly reſiding reſtrained him from all actual ſin, making him grow in grace and favour with God and Man, by gradual progreſs bringing the mental organs to ſuch a firm and vigorous conſtitution as enabled him to perform an unſining obedience in all trials: thereby placing human Nature in a better condition than when it firſt came forth from the hands of its Maker, for it was created in happineſs and innocence, but ſubject to dangers which might deprive it of both; whereas now it was reſtored to the ſame happineſs and innocence, but provided farther with a ſecurity againſt all hazard of loſing them. Thus to be conſiſtent with Scripture and the doctrines of our Church, it becomes us to raiſe our idea of the purity and perfections of our Saviour as high as imagination can carry them, yet ought we to aſcribe them all to the Divinity united with him.

18. Nevertheleſs theſe effects of the Union, ſo far as hitherto deſcribed, ſeem to terminate in the perſon of Jeſus, not extending to the reſt of the world, nor ſhewing him to have been the Saviour of Mankind. But though an interpoſition of almighty Power was neceſſary for reſtoring and perfecting their nature, it was not neceſſary that interpoſition ſhould be applied directly to every particular member of the ſpecies. For I have ſhewn in the Chapter on Providence

that

that in all caſes of ſupernatural interpoſition there is likewiſe a diſpoſing Providence ordering a chain of ſecond cauſes for compleating the deſign intended thereby. It is not the cuſtom of our almighty Governor to do much with his own hand, he applies it rarely; for to do more than requiſite for manifeſtation of his Power and Dominion, might prove an impeachment of his Wiſdom, nor are his works made to want it often. He comprized his interpoſitions in the ſame original plan with his ſecondary agents, and ſo contrived the latter as that they would ſometimes run amiſs, yet upon a few turns given them upon extraordinary occaſions, they ſhould fall into the right courſe, and thenceforward proceed of themſelves to bring forth the deſtined event.

We know the force of example, ſympathy, and inſtructions given in conſummate wiſdom, to work ſtrange alterations in the characters of men. Some Philoſophers have been poſitive that could we behold Virtue in her genuine colours unclouded by any heterogeneous mixture, ſhe would captivate all hearts: and I have attempted to make appear in the Chapter on Oeconomy how one perfect man may communicate his influence to others near him, who by degrees may ſpread it throughout a whole community. Since then the imaginary Wiſeman of the ancients was realized in the perſon of Jeſus, why ſhould we deem it unlikely that he, by the pattern

tern he has ſet before us in a life of righteouſneſs, by the love he has ſhewn in his ſufferings and death, by the doctrines, the precepts, the inſtitutions, the Religion he has delivered, together with ſome occaſional aids of the Holy Spirit, ſhould naturally raiſe human nature to its utmoſt perfection, and provide us with glorified bodies upon diſſolution of our preſent, without needing any ſupernatural operation upon us at our entrance into another life or interceſſion for further extraordinary favours than have been already beſtowed.

Nevertheleſs the effects which might be expected have not been produced in this ſublunary globe; multitudes being born and dying without any poſſibility of ſharing in them, and none having ever attained the righteouſneſs of their pattern; for the very beſt, not excepting the Apoſtles, have offended in many things: from whence may be inferred, that what has been done here will continue to produce its conſequences in the next ſtage of Being, until it has perfected individuals and ſpread to the whole human race, or ſuch part of it as has not wilfully rejected the opportunities already afforded them.

19. We have now a clue towards explaining certain technical terms much uſed in all Chriſtian diſcourſes. They are figurative and myſterious, and then moſt myſterious when taken moſt cloſely in the literal ſenſe; therefore here

it

it is particularly incumbent upon us to penetrate into the ſpirit contained under the letter: for as ſoon as a man can enter fully into the ſpirit of what is ſaid to him, he finds a light inſtantly break forth which diſpels all obſcurities and unveils the myſtery. I know there are many people utterly averſe to all rational explanations; they look upon every attempt to pry into ſacred myſteries as a profanation; and though they ſometimes ſeem fond of expounding difficult articles, yet is their expoſition ſuch as caſts no light but rather darkneſs viſible. It amuſes, it tranſports, it aſtoniſhes, fills with a ſacred awe and hurry of ſpirits, but conveys no clear idea, nor any real information; as if ignorance were the mother of devotion. Ignorance perhaps may be the mother, but a child will never grow to vigorous manhood who is kept always in his mother's lap: and the attempt to confine him there, proceeds often from ſiniſter deſign, becauſe he will be more governable and ſuſceptible to take any ply of zeal which may be wanted for private ends. Sometimes it ariſes from want of ſkill to do better, in ſuch as have no more knowledge than juſt to qualify them for nurſes, and a ſecret ambition of getting as many children under their tuition as they can poſſibly collect: and ſometimes it may ſpring from an injudicious imitation of the Scripture manner, which abounds in parables and dark

ſayings and riddles, ſo that ſeeing one may not ſee, and hearing one may not underſtand.

But it ſhould be conſidered, that the Scripture language muſt appear more enigmatical to us than it was originally intended to be: for it was calculated for the Jews, and moſt of the figures employed therein having been adopted from the Jewiſh doctors, may be preſumed familiar, and readily intelligible to that people. And for what were deſignedly riddles, they were delivered for holding our attention to the purſuit of one object requiring diligence to inveſtigate it: for in the very nature of a riddle, it perplexes at firſt, but is not paſt all finding out. Therefore we may go on without fear or ſcruple, as under no danger of a profanation in unravelling the myſteries, by that exerciſe of our beſt ſagacity and induſtry upon them which they were given to us to excite.

20. To begin with Redemption, the leading term introductory to moſt of the reſt: it ſignifies literally the purchaſe of a captive ſlave from his Maſter by money or other valuable conſideration. But the Redemption of Mankind was from thraldom under the Serpent, and was effected by bruiſing his head, which can hardly be called a valuable conſideration given for the purchaſe. Or if you will ſay, as vulgarly apprehended, that the purchaſe was made from God, who being ſupreme Lord and Maſter paramount of all captives, could command them out

out of the hands of their immediate owners, what money or thing of value did he receive? what vacant ſpace was there in the treaſury of his riches, that could admit an addition to encreaſe his wealth? what did he loſe by the recovery of a fallen race that ſhould require a compenſation for the damage? And yet in our days the term is ſo conſtantly reſtrained to caſes of ſlavery or pawnage bought off with money, that I do not recollect ever to have heard it applied to priſoners of war in civilized countries, although ſuch frequently obtain their enlargement for a certain ſum; becauſe they are not regarded as a property of the perſons who have them in their power, nor conſequently as an object of ſale.

But among the Jews, Redemption had a wider latitude, being extended to every deliverance from ſervitude, by what means ſoever effected. Thus in the Old Teſtament God is frequently ſtiled the Lord who redeemed Iſrael from the hand of Pharaoh, out of the houſe of bondage, the Lord that bought them: yet nobody can apprehend it done by a bargain made, or any gratuity given to Pharaoh, or other princes to reſign up their right of dominion over their ſlaves.

Nevertheleſs theſe expreſſions having been frequently uſed, gave occaſion for introducing the like into the Chriſtian dialect; ſuch as the ranſom for ſin, that we are bought with a price,

and the Satisfaction made to divine Juſtice. It muſt be owned that the phraſe of being bought with a price is not quite alien to our preſent modes of ſpeech; for when a perſon has met with many grievous accidents in the purſuit of an advantage he obtains at laſt, we commonly ſay that he has earned it dearly, that it has coſt him a vaſt deal of pains and anxiety. Therefore Chriſt having debarred himſelf from what we eſteem the enjoyments and conveniences of life, and ſubmitted to a cruel and ignominious death, in proſecution of his work of our deliverance, we may ſay properly that he paid dearly, by his ſelf-denial and ſuffering, for the benefits he procured for us. Yet ſtill this amounts to no more than a half purchaſe, where ſomething valuable is parted with, but there is nobody to receive it.

As for Satisfaction, that is plainly a very abſtract and figurative repreſentation of Juſtice as a Perſon, who was intereſted in our puniſhment, and could not recede from her demands without receiving an amends adequate in value. By which figure was ſhadowed forth the immutable Nature of things eſtabliſhed by the Creator, whereby righteouſneſs and innocence were made indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the poſſeſſion and ſecurity of happineſs: which being loſt in any part of the creation, occaſioned a gap in the all-perfect plan, not to be otherwiſe ſupplied

plied unleſs by ſome efficacious method contrived for the reſtoration of righteouſneſs and innocence.

21. Atonement and Sacrifice, together with the epithets Expiatory and Propitiatory, grow from the ſame root with that of Ranſom: for equally with that, they relate to the giving of ſomething highly prized by the receiver, only with this difference, that inſtead of money paid in conſequence of a bargain driven, they carry the idea of loſt favour regained by ſome acceptable preſent. This method of reconciliation being preſcribed to the Jews in the ceremonial law, and likewiſe practiſed by the Heathens, ſeems to have introduced among both an opinion, that after having angered God by their tranſgreſſions they might bring him into good humour again by the ſweet-ſmelling ſavour exhaling from their ſacrifices, or the magnificence and beauty of their oblations. But who in theſe times of better knowledge can imagine, that God is to be bribed out of his favours, that any thing can put him aſide from his purpoſe, or render him propitious when he was otherwiſe diſpoſed? The phraſe of bringing him to our deſires carries the ſame import with that in common uſe among ſailors, when they tell you that before you make into a particular port, you muſt bring ſuch a hill to bear directly over ſuch a point of the ſhore: they do not imagine that any efforts of theirs can ſtir the hill an inch from

its place, but that they can work their ſhip till it comes into the ſpot lying in a line with the two objects deſcribed. So oblations and ſacrifices could have no avail to move the heavenly Powers, but operated ſolely upon the offerers by bringing them, ſo far as the carnal ceremony or heatheniſh rite could do, into ſuch courſes of ſentiment and conduct whereto the heavenly Powers were always propitious.

The ſame reaſoning may be applied to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, it could have no efficacy to change the immutable God, who is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever, or to turn him from ſeverity and Juſtice to graciouſneſs and Mercy: but was efficacious for raiſing the human race to that righteouſneſs, which in his original conſtitution of univerſal Nature he had made the ſole avenue to eternal life. In this light we ſhall ſee the value of his ſacrifice immenſely ſurpaſſing that of all others: for they could only produce an imperfect temporary reverence and religious fear, and reſolution to do right, in a few perſons, whereas his will in due time work a compleat and permanent righteouſneſs throughout all Mankind in general. And we may add to our eſtimation by recurring to another uſe of the figure commonly made among ourſelves: for we ſay a man has ſacrificed his pleaſures, his health, his fortune to the good of his Country, when he has purſued it by meaſures detrimental to them all; yet without

without any thought of an oblation made to Heaven. Therefore it muſt greatly endear our Saviour to our affection to reflect how much he has ſacrificed to reſcue us from a wretchedneſs, which by all natural cauſes was abſolutely irremediable.

22. The greateſt ſacrifice being that of life, terminating in agonies and ſcourgings and deſpondency, and at laſt a cruel death upon the croſs, has occaſioned the Redemption to be generally ſpoken of as purchaſed by that ſacrifice alone, expreſſed often by another figure, not likely to be taken literally, that of our ſins being nailed to the tree.

But as it is no unprecedented thing to accumulate figure upon figure, this of the ſacrifice is re-painted by another, that of blood-ſhedding: and much talk has paſſed among the pious concerning the precious blood of Chriſt whereby we were redeemed. As if the material blood in his body was of a richer compoſition than any other blood, containing an occult quality, or magic virtue, a vivifying Spirit efficacious to purge away all ſeeds of corruption and mortality that could be found in the world. And the Papiſts carry this notion ſo far as to inſiſt, that no man can be ſaved without actually ſwallowing the body together with the blood included therein.

But I ſee no warrant to pronounce the blood of Jeſus a whit better than that of any other man who was born with a good conſtitution, and had lived a ſober temperate life: therefore it was not the blood ſhed but the act of ſhedding that availed to our benefit. Nor yet can the ſhedding be taken ſtrictly; for the crucifixion was not a manner of execution to cauſe much effuſion of blood, excepting only a few drops trickling from the wounds made in the fleſhy parts by the nails. But the Jewiſh ſacrifices having been conſtantly made by letting out the whole maſs of blood from the victims, this circumſtance came to ſtand for all kinds of death in general; and ſo we ſhould ſtill underſtand it to this day. For I ſuppoſe any body might alledge the text, Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed, in juſtification of his hanging a criminal who had murdered another by poiſoning or ſmothering or drowning, although there were not a drop of blood ſpilt either in the crime or the puniſhment. Therefore we may ſay without imputation of heterodoxy, that the blood was no otherwiſe precious, than as it ſerved to ſuſtain that life which he ſacrificed for our ſakes.

Nor yet can we ſuppoſe any benefit or delight accruing to the Father from ſeeing him exſpire upon the croſs: ſo that even his death was not expiatory nor propitiatory in itſelf, nor any farther than as it was neceſſary for eſtabliſh-

bliſhing the authority of the Religion he had inſtituted, for the reſtoring and perfecting human nature throughout the whole ſpecies of creatures partaking thereof.

23. The appellation of Merits can no more be taken in the ſtrict primary ſenſe than any of the former: for then it would imply a real benefit conferred, or profit procured deſerving of its adequate recompence. If any body has done you ſome ſignal ſervice in your health, your family, or your fortune, he has a merit with you, and you owe him a return of the like whenever an opportunity for making it ſhall be afforded. But what merit had even Chriſt himſelf with the Father? what obligation could his righteouſneſs and ſufferings lay him under? what acceſſion was made thereby to his Power, his Intelligence, his Wiſdom, or any other Attribute? You will find nothing tending that way in the ſacred records, which all along repreſent the reſtoration of fallen Man as a free Grace of the Father, not a debt to the Son.

Let us then reflect on the ordinary modes of ſpeech in daily uſe among us, and we may recollect that Merit is often applied to ſkill and ability ſufficient to go through with the undertaking we have under contemplation. A man of merit in his profeſſion is one who poſſeſſes the talents, the dexterity and knowledge, requiſite for performing the functions of it. The merits of a cauſe in contradiction to forms and modes

modes of pleading, are thoſe circumſtances attending it, which we apprehend of force to weigh with the Jury. Now in this ſenſe we cannot but acknowledge the merits of Chriſt all-ſufficient, able abundantly to ſave to the uttermoſt, and that the ſtream of living waters whereof he was the fountain, will never run dry ſo long as there is a thirſty ſoul wanting to be refreſhed by them.

24. That we are ſaved by the merits of Chriſt, nobody can deny to be a part of the Chriſtian doctrine: yet I ſhall not ſcruple to aſſert in the ſame breath, that we muſt be ſaved, if at all, by our own merits. As much a contradiction, and as ſhocking to the pious ear, as this may ſeem, I hope to make it good both from Scripture and from Philoſophy. Whoever will ſtudy carefully the eleven firſt Chapters of the epiſtle to the Romans, with the aid of Mr Locke, may ſee that it is the main ſcope of St Paul's argument to ſhew, that both Jews and Gentiles were under a neceſſity of reſorting to Chriſt: in the courſe of which argument he admits the Law to be holy and juſt and good, the terms of the Covenant being, Do this and thou ſhalt live; but the Jew did not do this, that is, did not fulfil the law, for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole. To the Gentile likewiſe the divine Power and Godhead was evidently diſplayed in the works of the Creation, ſo that being without the Law, he was a

law

law unto himſelf: nevertheleſs forgetting the inviſible God, he gave himſelf up to all manne of unnatural filthy luſts.

The Philoſophers too aſſerted that none but the Wiſeman could be ſecure of happineſs, who became ſuch by having a love of rectitude conſtantly predominant above all his other deſires, and urging him invariably to ſhape his actions thereby; for if he ever acted wrong, it was plain in that inſtance there was ſome other motive weighing with him more powerfully: but that there never yet has been ſuch a Wiſeman exiſting upon earth.

Therefore the Goſpel, and I may add Philoſophy, hath concluded all under ſin, whereby all have fallen ſhort of the glory of God, or eternal life: not becauſe the righteouſneſs of either Law, that of Moſes or that of Nature, were incapable of giving life; but becauſe the profeſſors of both were incapable of ever raiſing themſelves to ſuch righteouſneſs by an unfining obedience. This righteouſneſs then is the proximous cauſe operating to Salvation, for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord: nevertheleſs are we taught to rely wholly upon the Merits of Chriſt for our Salvation, becauſe they are the ſole and certain cauſe operating to the attainment of that righteouſneſs.

25. It is eaſy to ſee that I have hitherto ſpoken of Salvation as an entire deliverance from the power of death, or an actual poſſeſſion of eternal

eternal life: in which ſenſe no man has or ever will attain it in this world. We might attain it here too by our own merits, but we have none, nor can get any: our hopes of ever reaching it elſewhere muſt reſt ſolely upon the merits of Chriſt.

But there is a looſer ſenſe wherein a man is ſaid to be ſaved, when he is going on in the ſtrait road leading to ſalvation: ſtill the certainty of this road having ſuch termination depends upon the merits of Chriſt, efficacious to pave a way of Religion which ſhould conduct human nature to its full perfection. Nevertheleſs we muſt travel the road by our own righteouſneſs, not indeed that of works, but that which is of faith, and of works only ſo far as needful to evidence and ſtrengthen our faith. The merits of Chriſt are the cauſe operating to righteouſneſs; but faith the pipe turning the ſtream of operation upon ourſelves, inſtilling the living waters, the vivifying principle of Rectitude or Holineſs, which may daily grow more and more predominant over our appetites and averſions, annul the law of our members, and bring us gradually under obedience to the law of our minds.

There is ſtill another ſenſe wherein a man may be ſaid to be ſaved by faith alone before attaining the righteouſneſs which is of faith. If you knew a perſon labouring under a complication of diſtempers which muſt prove his deſtruction,

deſtruction, and were perſuaded there was ſome one eminent phyſician of ſkill fully ſufficient to deal with them, but againſt whom the patient had conceived an unaccountable averſion: tho' upon that account you might pronounce him a dead man, yet if afterwards by much labouring the point you could overcome his prejudices, you would be ready to cry, Now he is ſafe, preſuming that he would inſtantly apply, and certainly receive benefit from the doctor's preſcriptions. In this view we find it frequently repeated in Scripture, that whoſoever believeth in the Son ſhall be ſaved: and Mr Locke, in his Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, makes the belief of Jeſus being the Meſſiah, ſufficient to denominate a man a Chriſtian, and entitle him to all the benefits of the Goſpel covenant. For this is an entrance upon the road, and if the entrance be made with ſincerity and thorough heartineſs, which God only can know, although the convert ſhould be ſuddenly cut off, there is no doubt of his faring well in the next world, as was the caſe of the penitent thief. But though the road be certain, the perſeverance of the traveller is not certain, for ſome have fallen off from the faith they once embraced: but if the faith, being allowed time to grow, produce no crop of righteouſneſs, ſuch as this ſublunary climate is capable of ripening, we muſt pronounce it a dead faith, having

having no vigour to puſh forth the genuine fruit.

So that it is needful to obſerve the various degrees of force at times attending the ſame expreſſion, for elſe it will lead us into dangerous miſtakes: for a man may juſtly claim a rank among the ſaved, yet remain in a very tickliſh uncertain condition. Nay, he may actually be ſafe for the preſent, yet by too great ſecurity and ſupineneſs caſt himſelf out of that ſtate: therefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

26. The terms Mediation and Interceſſion ſeem at firſt ſight to exhibit a proſpect of ſome farther exertions of Omnipotence obtained from the Father, which he grants, not of his own meer motion, but for the ſake of gratifying his Son. This repreſentation of God being worked upon by paternal fondneſs and drawn by importunities to take meaſures he ſhould not otherwiſe have thought of, muſt give great handle for cavil to the freethinker, againſt which we ſhall find much difficulty to make a ſolid defence.

Beſides that the ſtupendous work of the Incarnation, together with occaſional aſſiſtances by the Holy Spirit, have rendered all farther ſupernatural operations needleſs: the touches given by them have turned the courſe of ſecond cauſes into their right channel, ſo that from thence-

thenceforward they may proceed unerringly to accompliſh their deſtined purpoſe, the Redemption of Man. We want nothing now from the Father, more than the continuance of his diſpoſing Providence and ſupport of the laws of univerſal Nature he has eſtabliſhed: for he has given all power to the Son upon whom we may place a ſure dependence.

And imputed righteouſneſs is a very abſtract idea, therefore the more ſurprizing it ſhould be ſo current among perſons who affect to run down all abſtractions, and to deal altogether in plain language which he that runs may read. In the imagination of the running reader, it will carry the face of ſomething ſolid you can hold in your hand, and may be delivered from one perſon to another, like a purſe of money, upon delivery whereof he may become rich who was poor before.

But whoever will ſtand ſtill a while to conſider attentively what he reads, may diſcern that theſe terms bear a reference to the completion of the plan of univerſal Nature by the coming of Chriſt. For Nature is the work of God: what ſhe does, is done by him. For we ſay truly that God giveth us our daily bread, although it comes to us by the production of natural cauſes, and diſpoſition of his ordinary Providence ſupplying us with means of procuring it. When fortune frowns, it is

his

his hand lying heavy upon us: when things fall out to our wiſh, we taſte of his Mercy and Bounty. Now the plan of ſecond cauſes was ſo drawn as to tend inevitably to our deſtruction without any proviſion among them for ever delivering us therefrom. This condition of human nature is called lying under a curſe, under the weight of irreconcileable wrath and vengeance: until the Chriſtian Religion, introduced by the greateſt of all interpoſitions, predetermined in the ſecret counſels or eternal purpoſe of Heaven, turned the ſecond cauſes influencing the human Will into a ſalutary courſe, which would end in a thorough ſalvation from all wretchedneſs, and an inveſtiture in the actual poſſeſſion of eternal life.

This progreſſive tendency of our Nature towards perfection is termed a ſtate of reconcilement and favour, and adoption to the privileges of children: the change of diſpoſition in ourſelves being repreſented by the figure of a change of diſpoſition in the Father from ſeverity and anger, to mercy and paternal affection. And as Chriſt was the agent who by the efficacy of his Religion worked that change, he is therefore ſtiled the Mediator, having management of the great tranſaction between God and Man, obtaining for us the terms of the new Covenant, bringing down peace from on high, good-will towards men.

27. Yet

27. Yet becauſe the perfection of righteouſneſs, which is the cement of peace and ſole object of good-will, remains unattainable in this mortal life, but we have ſeen reaſon to conclude there is a Chriſtian Religion in the next world whereby it muſt be compleated: therefore the Mediation of Chriſt did not terminate with his death and ſufferings, but he ſtill continues to make Interceſſion at the right hand of God on our behalf, as well during our abode upon earth, as on our removal hence and appearance at the day of judgement: By which Interceſſion muſt be underſtood, not an importuning of God for freſh bleſſings he had not intended to beſtow, but a gradual forwarding of our progreſs towards that character of holineſs, which will bring down thoſe bleſſings; they having been already made the natural conſequence and effect thereof in the pre-eſtabliſhed Nature of things.

Then for the word Imputation, it implies the placing ſome article to the account of a particular perſon; or rather, in common ſpeech, the diſcharge of an article that had been ſet down to him. When we would excuſe a man for ſome offenſive behaviour, it is cuſtomary to ſay, you muſt impute it to his ignorance, or indiſcretion, or over haſty zeal to oblige: thus diſcharging the man from the fault by laying it upon ſome infirmity whoſe miſguidings are not to be deemed his act: But though it might

be a ſort of Catachreſis in vulgar language, to talk of imputing a good deed, this form of expreſſion is current in the Chriſtian language: for we are not to impute our ſins to Chriſt, for that would be laying the blame upon his inſtigating us thereto, but his merits to ourſelves.

A man's ſucceſs in the world depends upon his ſituation, his opportunities, and the merit he has in his profeſſion: now the profeſſion of a Chriſtian is that of Wiſdom or Holineſs of ſentiment and conduct, as the only way to the attainment of eternal life. He may confide in the divine Goodneſs, that he ſhall never want a proper ſituation, nor opportunities: therefore his proſpect of ſucceſs muſt be greater or leſs in proportion to his merit. When he comes to ſtate the account with his own heart, he muſt be conſcious that he has not the merit needful; if he fancies he has, he deceives himſelf, and a deluſive hope is more fatal than deſirable: ſo that the only ſolid ground of his hopes muſt be found in the merit or efficacy of his Religion gradually to ſtrengthen his Will or the law of his mind, and inveſt him with the merit he wants.

By this way he may turn the balance of the account in his favour, being allowed to avail himſelf of the merit he ſhall one day acquire, and the performances he ſhall be enabled to a-

chieve

chieve thereby: which I take to be meant by imputing the merits of Chriſt, that is, placing to the credit ſide of our account thoſe effects, which they will infallibly produce for the amendment of our Nature.

But they will produce no effects unleſs thei influence be particularly derived upon ourſelves by the channel of Faith; therefore it is faith that juſtifies: not that it makes us actually juſt, for no man goes out of the world a juſt man, but the true believer perſevering to the end carries out that ſeed of righteouſneſs which is of faith, that will grow to full maturity in a more ſalubrious climate. So that although upon his departure hence he ſhould not be put into immediate poſſeſſion of eternal life, yet he will inherit the promiſe of it, and fall into the ſure and certain road conducting thereto, from which there is no hazard of his being ever turned aſide.

And I think any man who has a taſte for rectitude, or a hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, muſt regard it as a moſt deſirable happineſs to be placed in a ſituation wherein he ſhall continually be making proficiency towards the perfection of his Nature, and feel the ſoothing ſatisfaction of having neglected none of his opportunities; but at the cloſe of every day ſhall be able to ſay with truth, I have been moving onward in my progreſs, I am advanced one ſtep

nature towards the full accomplishment of my will. So that death to the righteous or faithful may be the direct passage into a state of happiness, although not into a state of absolute perfection: and that it is not, may be gathered from several hints given in Scripture of a final state surpassing the intermediate in blessedness.

We now see the points in dispute between the Philosopher and the Christian; when they approximated one another, reduced to a very narrow compass, still leaving a near resemblance in their features. The one will not admit the fall of man by the artifices of the Serpent: but he acknowledges that human Nature lies very low immersed in the filth of a material composition, whose corruptions taint the very soul; unable to clear itself from folly and error, or rise in any single instance to the perfect character of Wisdom. He banishes the Devil from his system: yet retains the prevalence of appetite, example, and custom, called the world and the flesh; and allows they will generate anger, revenge, spite, rancour, and other devilish tempers of mind. He will not hear of an Incarnation, that is, the omnipresent God included within a human body: yet he may comprehend a continued application of the Deity to the mental organs of a human frame, and how powerful efficacy the opinion of such an event has had to make a system of Religion prevail in the world. He finds no evidence of a Holy Spirit working upon

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our hearts: yet is [illegible] vigour and languour, of [illegible] the mind; that we do not always proceed with the same spirit, that when it is [illegible] can make any good progress in whatever he undertakes, and that there are certain means of quickening and quenching, or raising and depressing that spirit. He thinks the current belief abounding in absurdities and contradictions, that is, while he beholds it under the [illegible] of the nursery: for when stripped of [illegible] appearing in its native colours, with [illegible] lineaments drawn out upon one uniform [illegible] he will discern it regular and consistent throughout, will distinguish between the [illegible] modes of expression rendered necessary by the condition of human nature in [illegible] mankind, and the [illegible] introduce; he will [illegible] that the system of [illegible] deadness to the world, and heavenly-mindedness, is the same with his own system of rectitude in sentiment and conduct, expressed only in a [illegible] guage.

If he will not allow [illegible] believing some particular propositions [illegible] be fair enough to grant that is [illegible] believing: neither of them are virtues [illegible] themselves, nor make a part of the moral character. Nevertheless the character may undoubtedly be influenced by opinion so far as to take a total change:

ſo that it is matter of importance what we believe, or diſbelieve. Even if he ſhould ſuppoſe an opinion erroneous, opinion being neither good nor bad in itſelf, he will judge of it by its conſequences: and ſince as two negatives make an affirmative, ſo one error may bring a man round again to the point from which another error had led him aſtray, he muſt ſee the expedience of countenancing an innocent miſtake, which will repair the damage done by a more pernicious.

29. But our buſineſs here is not with the Philoſopher to concern ourſelves about what he rejects or approves: we are to examine the Chriſtian doctrines, and penetrate if we can into the true ſpirit and deſign of them. It has been already ſuggeſted, that the point driven at therein was to bring men to a juſt apprehenſion of their Maker, and the relation they ſtand in to him: and this is confirmed by many paſſages of Scripture. Chriſt has declared that he came not to ſeek his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him, that the love of God is one of the two hinges whereon hang all the law and the prophets, that we muſt ſtrive to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; and has taught us to pray, Our Father which art in heaven, thy kingdom come, thy Will be done; for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever, all which are elſe-

elſewhere compriſed in the expreſſion of coming to the Father.

Nevertheleſs there are multitudes of texts which promiſe Salvation upon coming to the Son, upon believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt; how then ſhall we reconcile this ſeeming diſcordance? We cannot be ſafe without coming to the Father; yet we may be made ſafe by adherence to the Son? I need only one citation to ſolve this difficulty: No man can come to the Father but through the Son? So that Faith in Chriſt gives aſſurance of Salvation as being the remote cauſe of it, becauſe he is the way and the door, by which we may certainly arrive thereat: for whoever ſincerely and heartily believes in the Son, ſhall infallibly find acceſs to the Father. Were it poſſible to disjoin a true Faith in Chriſt from the love of God, it would not avail alone: for many ſhall ſay in the laſt day, Lord have we not prophefied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works: yet if they have not done the Will of the Father, but were workers of iniquity, they ſhall be rejected. It ſeems ſcarce credible to have ever happened in fact, that perſons, poſſeſſed of ſo high a degree of faith as to caſt out devils, which was a pitch the firſt diſciples could not riſe to, ſhould yet continue workers of iniquity: but this was a caſe put in ſpeculation to ſhew us that the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, without natural

Religion in that perfection whereto they were calculated to raiſe it, will obtain a paſſport for no man: wherefore the latter ſtill remains the ſole proximate cauſe of Salvation, and the end whereto the Goſpel was deſigned to conduct us.

30. But what is to be underſtood by coming to the Father? Not a loco-motion ſurely: for that were ſuperfluous. God is omnipreſent, exiſting ſubſtantially throughout the whole infinitude of ſpace: he is cloſe to us, within us, and round about us; ſo that we ſhall be never the nearer to him for any change of place. But this is a philoſophical idea: the plain man apprehends him to live a great way off, ſome hundred of miles up above in the clouds. Be it ſo: then what mountains ſhall we climb, what ſprings, what carriages, what wings ſhall we procure to get to him? The expreſſion therefore is evidently figurative, and we muſt ſearch for the thing ſignified by the figure. The Scripture informs us, He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, muſt have his mind poſſeſſed with a ſenſe of his almighty power and dominion: yet this alone will not ſuffice: he muſt believe likewiſe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him, that is, muſt be penetrated with a perſuaſion of the divine Providence, Protection, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Mercy, Goodneſs, and other Attributes. For if he leaves any of them out, he will be liable to fancy God

an unconcerned ſpectator of ſublunary affairs, or unſkilful to manage them compleatly, or a rewarder of none, or that he rewards all indifferently whether they ſeek him or no. Which Coming, as above explained, is expreſſed in other places by the beatific viſion, ſeeing God as he is, beholding him face to face, knowing even as alſo we are known.

There is ſtill another expreſſion, if not directly containing, yet conducting to the ſame ſenſe. Thoſe upon whom the ſentence was pronounced, Depart from me, were workers of iniquity, perſons who had neglected to do the Will of the Father, and therefore incapable of acceſs to Chriſt, or through the ſole paſſage opened by his interceſſion to the Father. Now we know our actions are all ſhaped by our Will, and the Will is conſtantly determined by motives and deſires occurring to the thought: wherefore the ſentiments of mind, figured by Coming and Seeing, muſt be ſentiments of the heart as well as of the underſtanding. It is not meerly right and ſound ſpeculative opinion that will anſwer the purpoſe, unleſs it touch our ſenſibility, and give a right turn to the affections: for they muſt bring our ideal cauſes or opinions to become motives of action. When we can diſcern ſomething inviting and deſirable in the things we know, ſome profit to be worked from them, it will raiſe a dependence, an expectation and appetence, which muſt keep the

the thoughts steadily attentive to their object, and determine the Will to put in practice the means as they severally occur, for making the profit.

But as the wind cannot blow contrary ways at once, so neither can the affections take their right turn while attached to objects of sense and gratification of the desires excited thereby: wherefore those must be removed from our attention, the soul be purged from all foulness cast upon her by the gross corporeal machine, the darkness of earthly fumes dispersed away from her mental eye, before she can attain a clearness of vision. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God, without holiness no man can see the Lord; and we are exhorted to die unto the world, to put off the old man, to subdue the fleshly lusts, that is, the impulses of our inferior faculties, in order that we may have our conversation in heaven.

Nevertheless while in this world we cannot have our conversation altogether there, for the necessary cares of life will claim large intervals of our attention: yet may we obtain some intercourses by prayer, and meditation, or a little serious reflection: We cannot now see God face to face but as in a glass darkly, and the dust and smoak of earth will continually throw a foulness upon our glass: yet may we keep ourselves watchful to brush off the soil as fast as falling,

falling, and not ſuffer it to gather in pimply blotches upon the ſurface. We cannot gain a near acceſs to the Father, for the world and the fleſh will continually retard our progreſs: yet we may hold ourſelves in readineſs to improve every opportunity that ſhall offer to advance a little onward in the way that has been opened for us.

31. We have now found what was the main ſcope and deſign aimed at in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, namely, to bring us completely to the Father in ſome future ſtage of our exiſtence, and to forward us thitherward during our time of life with as much ſpeed as the cumbrance of our mortal bodies, the avocations of earthly concerns, and oppoſition of the world ſhall leave practicable. It remains next to enquire, by what ſteps the proſecution of this deſign is carried on.

Here enmity and zeal combine to lead into the ſame miſtake: both look for the benefits of Chriſt's miſſion in an encreaſe of knowledge, and the diſcovery of new truths: both reſt their cauſe upon this point, and join iſſue upon the matter of fact. One inſiſts that no improvement has been made in ſcience, that nothing is to be learnt from Revelation except a few myſterious aſſertions, which, if true, would add nothing to the ſtock of knowledge. The other avers that life and immortality were firſt diſcovered in the Goſpel, that till then mankind lay under

under darkneſs and ignorance, the wiſdom of the wiſe being nothing better than deluſion, error, and trifle, that light and truth ſprang forth by Chriſt, and without him we ſhould ſcarce have known whether two and two make four.

Whereas this is placing the thing upon a wrong bottom, for the merits of Chriſt and his Religion do not lie in diſcoveries of ſcience, not even that reſpecting life and manners: he came not to make us more knowing, but better men. The world knew enough before to have anſwered their neceſſary purpoſes, and if every one in it had lived up to what he knew, it would have been a happy and paradiſiacal world: for the eternal power and Godhead were manifeſt, in the works of the creation, but when men knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened, not by a failure of light, but becauſe they ſhut their eyes againſt it. The defect of human Nature lies ſolely in the weakneſs of the Will to reſiſt the impulſes of appetite or reſtrain the rovings of imagination: it does not want quicker faculties nor additional beams of light, but ſtrength and alertneſs to make all advantages of thoſe it has. For we have ſeen that Wiſdom, as ſynonymous with Prudence or Rectitude or Righteouſneſs, conſiſts in a ſenſibility of the heart and readineſs of the Will to follow conſtantly whatever ſhall be

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disposed expedient in the judgment. This imbecillity, then, destroying the soundness of Wisdom or full health of the mind, was the disorder which the Gospel was given to cure: no wonder then it should apply no remedies to those parts in the constitution where they were not wanted. Upon which account it was termed foolishness by the Greeks, and I suppose is still esteemed so by some moderns, who, like them, expect to find some profound secrets of Philosophy laid open. But it is no disparagement of the Gospel to allow, that no such treasures are contained there, nor any thing new revealed unless some articles peculiar to its own plan, as the utter inability of human Nature ever to get out itself from the wretchedness oppressing it, the distinction of Persons in the Deity, the hypostatic Union, effusions of the Holy Spirit, and such like.

Not that I deny it has in consequence produced an improvement of our knowledge: we may see in the Chapter on Oeconomy, comparing § 13 and 20, how much sounder notions the plain Christian entertains, even of Theology and natural Religion, than the ancient philosopher. For an enlargement of knowledge will ensue upon a due exercise of the faculties without any fresh information from elsewhere. So that the sacred oracles were not issued to teach, but put us in a way of finding out for ourselves, by raising a concern and ardency for the discovery

very of ſalutary truths, turning the thoughts into profitable trains of reflection, uniting us in the ſame courſes of thinking, and quickening our diligence in the purſuit of them.

Theſe were the ſalutary remedies wanted in the diſtempered condition of our Nature. It is true, our knowledge is ſcanty at beſt, and our rational faculties imperfect: but imperfection is not the ſame thing with diſeaſe. Our diſorder lies in a ſluggiſh indolence unleſs rouzed by ſome paſſion, an inſenſibility to our own intereſts ever ſo little remote, and a perpetual miſapplication of our powers. We act fooliſhly and madly: but ignorance is not folly nor madneſs. He that ſnatches up the copper handle of a tea kettle, and burns his fingers, deſerves our compaſſion rather than our cenſure: but if he catches hold on a red hot iron, where he can ſee the heat, we ſhall chide him for being a fool and a madman. So it is the ſenſitive faculties that want to be rectified; imagination and appetite to be diſciplined and turned into their proper courſes: which they are much better thrown into by reverence and authority, than by reaſoning; for they are like the deaf-adder which heareth not the voice of the charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely.

Therefore we find Jeſus always ſpeaking with authority, not as the Scribes; the Scribe, who was expounder of the Law, and the Philoſopher, expounder of the Law of Nature,

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could only lay their obſervations upon both before the audience, ſubmitting to their judgement, whether the reaſonings thereupon were juſt: but it is too much trouble to go through with ſuch an examination, the hearer comes only to hear, or perhaps to judge upon inſpection, not to reflect or conſider for himſelf; ſo the reaſonings miſſing the ſanction of his own judgement cannot have their proper force. But the ſtile of Jeſus ran otherwiſe, I and the Father are one, I ſpeak not of myſelf but from him that ſent me, whoſo keepeth my ſayings ſhall not taſte of death. Here is no trouble needful to examine or reflect: the ſound received through the ears will impreſs its ideas with ſufficient force upon the mind.

There are many excellent ſentiments of God and morality interſperſed in the writings of the ancients: but thoſe writings are ſtudied by few, and read chiefly for curioſity and amuſement, regarded as ingenious compoſitions, ſhowing a ſagacity and juſtneſs of thought in the Authors. They may make ſome impreſſion in the reading, which quickly dies away again upon laying the book aſide: as Tully tells us was his caſe with reſpect to Plato upon the immortality of the ſoul. Whereas the Teſtament is the firſt book we are taught to read, to receive as the oracle of God containing the way to Salvation, which at our utmoſt peril we muſt not diſregard, and the truth whereof it is a ſin

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to doubt, therefore whatever is drawn from thence comes accompanied with a reverence and idea of high importance which give a force to the impreſſion. Let a man take for his theſis the Stoical maxim, Things out of our power are nothing to us, and deſcant upon the imprudence of ſolicitude and anxiety for future events which we can no ways prevent or provide againſt, it will not work the effects which the very ſame diſcourſe might do, pronounced from the pulpit upon the text, Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and interlarded with other texts of ſimilar import.

Thus the Goſpel operates to our benefit chiefly by its ſacredneſs and having the authority of a law eſtabliſhed in Heaven: which authority muſt depend upon our reverence of the Lawgiver. Wherefore it is that we are ſo continually exhorted to believe in the name of Jeſus, that God hath given him a name above all other names, whether of things in heaven or upon earth below, or things under the earth, that there reſided a Divinity within him, that his words were the words of God, and his acts the acts of God, in the performance whereof his human powers were only inſtrumental.

This I take to be the fundamental article of Chriſtian Faith: if there are other articles whereof it is pronounced, This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully without doubt he ſhall periſh everlaſtingly;

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it muſt be becauſe they were neceſſary to protect and eſtabliſh the principal: for if it were poſſible for any man fully and heartily to acknowledge the authority of the Goſpel and of the Church, although through ſome miſapprehenſion he ſhould fall deficient with reſpect to the other particulars enumerated, I humbly apprehend that Athanaſius himſelf would not anathematize him.

33. We are now come to the rock whereon Chriſt erected his Church, when he gave Simon the appellation of Peter; the ſtone which the builders refuſed, but is become the head ſtone of the corner: which we find to be the authority of a great name ſupereminent above all other names, entitling the owner to ſay with truth and propriety, I and the Father are one. And this leads to the neceſſity of that greateſt interpoſition of Omnipotence, the deſcent of the Son of God upon earth to take upon him our human Nature, or Union of the Deity with the Soul of a man, as herein before explained. For the authority of a name cannot be firmly eſtabliſhed, ſo as to become the corner ſtone of a durable building, unleſs by a real character in the perſon aſſuming it.

We are bred up from our childhood in a reverence for Jeſus, whom whenever we have occaſion to ſpeak of we call Chriſt or our Saviour, and ſhould eſteem it blaſphemy in any one to drop a hint of his being a meer man,

ſuch as Socrates or Moſes. But education only tranſmits opinions, which muſt have derived originally from ſome other ſource. I do not deny that the prophecies and miracles upon record opened an ample ſource of evidence to the firſt diſciples: yet they could not have gained an unreſerved credit to the words and example of one in whom any miſapprehenſion or miſbehaviour had been obſerved. And for ſuch of our moderns as are willing to examine the principles inſtilled into them, the external evidence being unavoidably abated in its force by great diſtance of time and change of language, they are leſs likely to be ſatisfied without a character of wiſdom running uniform throughout both in the Religion, and the Inſtitutor. For though Wiſdom in the ſenſe I have uſed it all along, does not neceſſarily imply a compleat knowledge of every thing, yet it does imply an exact diſcernment of the knowledge it has, ſo as to diſtinguiſh unerringly what lies within its compaſs, and what does not: therefore we may truſt unreſervedly to the words and example of the perfect Wiſeman, becauſe he will aſſert nothing but what he certainly knows to be true; and exhibit nothing as a pattern for imitation, whereof he does not clearly diſcern the expedience.

34. Therefore the Saviour of Mankind muſt poſſeſs the character of perfect Wiſdom, conſiſting of a full power of endurance and forbearance;

bearance; he muſt be a conqueror by a conqueſt greater than that of the World, the conqueſt of himſelf, a compleat victory over all the allurements of ſin, and terrors of death. Now this character, elſewhere imaginary, the object only of ſpeculative admiration, became realized in Jeſus. He was the Lamb without blemiſh, neither was there guile found in his mouth; his bittereſt enemies could find nothing to blame either in his words or actions, though they ſought it diligently and with all their artifices; and when bent upon his deſtruction, they could compaſs it no otherwiſe than by a falſe interpretation of his words. He had claimed to be the Son of God, Meſſiah the Conqueror, in the ſenſe juſt now deſcribed: they reſolved to underſtand it Conqueror of the World, particularly of the Romans; ſo they made him a rebel againſt Ceſar, dangerous to the government, one whom no friend of the Emperor could patiently ſuffer to live.

Yet this Lamb was to be ſacrificed as a free-will offering by his own conſent: he laid down his life, nor did any man take it from him; and during its continuance he joined temperance and fortitude to innocence. The forty days receſs in the wilderneſs, whether you take it as the narration of real facts, or figurative of imaginations ſuggeſted in his thoughts,

ſhows him void of ambition, ſuperior to the world with all its glories, and actuated ſolely by a principle of rectitude, or obedience to the Will of Heaven. He was meek and lowly, had not where to lay his head; when reviled, he anſwered not again; when ſcourged, buffeted and ſpit upon, he endured the pain and the ſhame without repining; he was led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, that is, with the quietneſs not the ignorance of a lamb, for he knew it was to be made by a barbarous execution.

Inſtances perhaps might be produced of people going through great ſelf-denials and ſufferings when under influence of ſome ſtrong deſire. Covetouſneſs will make men ſtarve themſelves: ambition carry them through inceſſant toils and dangers: a quick ſenſe of honour or ſhame will render them inſenſible of wounds, diſtreſſes, and even the terrors of death: revenge will work a total indifference to what becomes of themſelves, ſo they can wreak their reſentment upon another. But theſe are no proofs of a ſtrength in the Will to bear down oppoſition: it is carried forcibly by the impulſe of one more powerful paſſion overcoming another powerful in a leſs degree; like a veſſel driven by the force of a ſtorm againſt the torrent of a rapid river. Therefore ſuch exploits diſplay no features in the character of conſummate Wiſdom, which achieves

achieves its arduous works with a calm deliberate reſolution, proceeding ſteddily againſt all obſtacles upon one uniform plan, in contemplation of their rectitude, their neceſſary tendency to ſome important end, and in compliance with the Will of Heaven which orders all things for the beſt.

35. But ſuch invincible ſtrength of the ſuperior faculties is no where to be found in mortal man; for God in his firſt formation of human nature, was pleaſed to give it an imbecillity with which it could never gain an abſolute dominion over appetite, averſion and paſſion: it could only be raiſed thereto by an interpoſition of his almighty power joined in union with the manhood. Yet he had ſo ordered the courſe of ſecond cauſes and conſtitution of human Nature, as that the union was needful to be made only with one man: for the benefits worked thereby would redound to the whole human race, whoſe Nature in its original conſtitution had been formed capable of being perfected by inſtruction, guidance, ſympathy, and habit of right action.

God is not profuſe of his Omnipotence: he employs it rarely, upon thoſe occaſions only wherein he had rendered it neceſſary by leaving deficiencies in his plan of Nature, purpoſely to admit theſe interpoſitions of his own hand, which he had predetermined from everlaſting. Nor yet does he perform his extraordinary

works wholly by his own power, but with the concurrence of ſecond cauſes, turning and keeping them in the courſe wherein they will naturally bring forth the deſtined event.

Had this not been his method of proceeding, a mediation and interceſſion had been ſuperfluous: for he might have changed our Nature from weakneſs to ſtrength by an immediate operation upon us all. Neither would there have been need of an abiding union even with the one Man: it cannot be doubted that God, by a ſingle exertion of his Omnipotence, the ſame wherewith he created all ſubſtance, could have remoulded him into a perfect creature, ſingular in its kind, as fancied by the Arians. But he was pleaſed to employ the natural force of habit for working the alteration, and uſed his own hand only to preſerve that habit from a diſcontinuance by any ſingle act of ſin, which might have cauſed it to fail of its proper effect. So that without irreverence to our Saviour we may preſume, that if the Deity had been withdrawn from his human ſoul juſt before entering upon the laſt trial, he would not have had ſtrength to go through it, nor could have verified by his actions what he had expreſſed in words, Nevertheleſs not my Will be done, but thine, O Father. Therefore it was neceſſary the union ſhould be continued to the laſt, that he might be able to perfect and ſupport the character of Wiſdom or Righteouſneſs, needful for giving

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an authority and efficacy to the Religion he eſtabliſhed, which was by ſlow degrees to introduce and complete the like character in the whole ſpecies.

36. Here we may recall to mind what has been obſerved in this chapter before, that the reformation propoſed, at leaſt in this world, was that of the ſpecies in general, not of every individual member; there running ſuch a connection of intereſts and mutual intercourſe among them, that an amendment worked in ſome, would one time or other ſpread among the reſt: this life being a preparation for the next, and each man fitted therein for the ſtation he will have to occupy, and the functions he will be wanted to perform in the community whereto he is going. Wherefore it may be neceſſary, that many ſhould die good Chriſtians, though it be not neceſſary that all ſhould partake here of the righteouſneſs which is by Faith.

From hence let ſuch as claim to be the elect, the choſen veſſels, learn not to conceit themſelves peculiar favourites upon that account: for their extraordinary gifts are beſtowed for the public good, not for their own ſakes; they are but veſſels employed to hold the living waters, which are to be diſtributed among the whole ſociety; the arteries for circulating the blood throughout all the members in the body of Chriſt. Let them not, like the ſons of Ze-

bedee, aſpire to a high rank in heaven; but place their glory in being made inſtruments of bleſſedneſs kept in ſtore for the human race. It is natural to wiſh themſelves happy, but let them likewiſe wiſh ſincerely, that, if poſſible, every fellow creature might be as happy as themſelves.

Hence likewiſe let the Rationaliſt learn which way to look for the ſtream of benefits flowing from the Goſpel. Philoſophy addreſſes the ſtudious, the man grown, and the few: Religion the thoughtleſs, the child, and the many. One holds up light to direct the courſes of thought: the other inſpires a vigour of warmth to make men think. One applies to the head, which is the ruling power; the other to the heart, which is the executive. The prerogative of Reaſon lies very low, perpetually overpowered by the rabble of appetites, paſſions and opinions: it is in this part our conſtitution is diſordered, and here it wants amendment. You can never expect to govern ſteddily without gaining an intereſt among the populace: and it is well known what influence a great name has upon them; for they readily diſtinguiſh one name from another, but they cannot diſtinguiſh meaſures, to ſee which are beneficial, which pernicious, and which wholly unavailing, good only in ſpeculation.

It is a common ſhrewd obſervation, that if men would follow their own reaſon, they need

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not mind what parſons preach: this may be very true; and ſo it is, that if they would perform all their digeſtions properly, and keep their blood pure, they need not mind the Phyſician; but this is the very thing for which in a diſtempered habit the phyſician is wanted to aſſiſt them in doing. But the Rationaliſt can digeſt his ideas properly and keep his ſentiments pure, nor finds any help in medicine. Be it ſo: yet his vanity will allow me to ſay, there are very few of ſuch a happy temperature. Will he then forget that the object had in view was the improvement of mankind in general, that the Goſpel was preached to the poor? Therefore it is ſaid, that life and immortality were brought to light through the Goſpel: not that they were never thought of before, but they were then brought to light when made viſible to all by becoming a popular doctrine. Let him ſuppoſe Chriſtianity baniſhed from the world; I do not aſk what he would loſe himſelf, but what would the world in general be the better?

Nor yet need he be too ſecure againſt all damage to his own ſweet perſon: for he ought to know the inſinuative force of ſympathy and intercourſe with other people, whereby the ſoundeſt haileſt conſtitution may poſſibly catch an infection by converſing amongſt very diſeaſed company. Or if he pronounces this danger purely imaginary, ſtill he may reflect on

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the benefit he has already received. Can he be ſure of having made the ſame progreſs, had he been bred up amongſt heathens and people of no Religion? Perhaps he might have ſpent his time in hunting after butterflies, or poking into every puddle for a Polypus. The concern for futurity and great importance of right ſentiment and behaviour which were the baſis and firſt direction of his induſtry, were inculcated into him early by thoſe who had received them through the eſtabliſhed channels. Nor is it unlikely, that even the abſurdities and contradictions he was taught to eſteem ſacred in the nurſery, may have put him upon that careful examination to which he owes all his preſent ſcience.

So that the wiſeſt of us have a perſonal intereſt in the general turn of thought prevailing around us: therefore as ſoon as he ſhall pleaſe to compoſe a form of rudiments better ſuited to the capacities of children and the vulgar, than thoſe now current, and ſatisfy me of its excellence, I will conſent to prefer it; provided that till then, he will give me leave to uſe the Catechiſms already put into my hands.

37. It remains to conſider by what channels of operation the perfect righteouſneſs, produced in one man by union with the Deity, works to the amendment of the human race; and the firſt of them has appeared to be, that of authority and name. But name and authority will

will not avail without ſomething farther, where-to they direct, ſome particular doctrines and practices they tend to introduce: and ſuch we receive tranſmitted to us in the ſacred writings. Which writings carry a derivative authority, as being the main channel connecting nearly with the fountain: like our New-river-head, ſo called, becauſe it is the head from whence all the pipes are laid to ſupply our occaſions, yet is but a reſervoir of waters derived from higher ſprings. For Jeſus left nothing upon record himſelf, but inſtructed his apoſtles, and made them ſo fully acquainted with the Spirit of his inſtitution, that they could not fail of diſtinguiſhing what was conformable thereto, from what was not; neither could they miſtake in the grounds there were for the facts they related, or heard related; and it is the perſuaſion of this ſpirit conſtantly poſſeſſing them, that gains them the character of inſpired writers. Therefore it is not material whether the firſt Goſpel was penned eight, or eight and twenty years after the crucifixion, nor whether we have the original or only a tranſlation: for the whole Canonical Scripture, in its preſent form, having been extant and current throughout the Church in the times of the Apoſtles, they muſt have corrected all errors and miſrepreſentations, if there had been any; wherefore it derives the full authority of its origin, and is received as the word of God.

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This channel takes a different courſe from that worked out by human reaſon, becauſe laid out upon different ground: therefore was counted fooliſhneſs by the Greeks, who had ſtudied the head, but were unacquainted with the turnings of the human heart. Philoſophy proceeds by an improvement of knowledge, by enquiries into the nature of things, from whence will appear what tenor of conduct is moſt conducive to happineſs: therefore claſſes the virtues under the four Cardinals of Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Juſtice; expecting that when men are once convinced what meaſures are moſt prudential, their reaſon will urge them to purſue them. But it is well known that reaſon and judgment and prudence, however well informed, are feeble powers. Beſides that application to the reaſon can only be made in perſons who have attained a competent ſhare of it by exerciſe, and experience: but how will you deal with thoſe who have no reaſon? Some principles are neceſſary to be inſtilled into the vulgar, and children, before they come to the uſe of reaſon, to bring them into it, and put them upon the exertion of their faculties. Therefore the Goſpel makes a different diſtribution of Duty into the three theological virtues, of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and impreſſes an idea of obligation and a zeal, which may introduce them into per-

ſons who were not capable of diſcerning the prudence of them.

I have already given the beſt explanation I can of thoſe virtues in the three chapters bearing their titles, and need only add here, that Faith, the foundation of the other two, receives its ſtrength among the generality from the authority of the Scriptures. Wherefore it is a wiſe proviſion of the civil government to protect them againſt attacks, nor is it an infringement of our natural liberty; for genuine liberty can never conſiſt in any thing which tends to the diſorder, and hurt of the community. Calm argumentation upon the conſtruction of them, and liberty of conſcience are juſtly permitted; but open depreciatings and ridicule can do no good, for they operate only upon the paſſions, therefore cannot improve the underſtanding, and tend ſolely to bring back that unconcernedneſs for the future, and indifference either to right or wrong, which is the great diſorder of human nature.

38. Religion, being calculated for the lower part of our human compoſition, to introduce a law of the mind into ſuch as had none of their own, to diſcipline Imagination that it may fall into proper trains, therefore proceeds by methods beſt adapted to work upon that faculty, that is, by aſſertion, injunction, form, and inſtitution, rather than diſſertation or argument. So that it is an idle queſtion of thoſe who

who aſk, What ſhall I learn by going to Church? for the principal uſe of going is not ſo much to learn, as to impreſs a thorough perſuaſion of what they had learned before, to ſtir up an induſtry and appetite for profitable exerciſes of their underſtanding at home; to bring their ſpontaneous judgments and common apprehenſions to run in conformity with their deliberate, and diſcipline their executive powers, the appetites, and habits, to follow ſteadily the directions of the rational, that ſo there may be no wavering in their ſentiments or conduct, no alternate ſeaſons of diſcretion and thoughtleſsneſs.

But as I have obſerved above, that the Scriptures carry a derivative authority, ſo that of the forms and inſtitutions practiſed among us comes by a more remote derivation. I do not remember many of them enjoined expreſsly in the Goſpel: there are two Sacraments, and one very ſhort form of prayer; but the particular manner uſed in performing them, and the obſervation of Sundays, which ſeems to come next in ſacredneſs, were no articles in the Code. In theſe things we copy the uſages of the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, who muſt be acknowledged to know the mind of their Maſter; and therefore whatever has the ſanction of their example, has the authority of an inſtitution given by him; except in caſes where it is viſible they modelled their behaviour

viour with a regard to the time, and country wherein they lived. For ſome of their cuſtoms, as the love feaſts, the community of goods, the miniſtration of tables by ſeven deacons, the abſtinence from blood, have been long ſince diſuſed.

The like regard to times and countries, and incidents happening, has created a neceſſity of compiling ſeveral Creeds, and making alterations in our modes of worſhip, and rules of Church diſcipline. All which the plain man muſt take upon the authority of the particular Church whereof Providence has caſt his lot to be a member, by cauſing him to be born and bred in it, or by ſome natural means working his converſion into it: and the intelligent too owes a deference to the ſame authority for order and expedience ſake, as knowing that authority is the main ſpring employed in the Chriſtian diſpenſation for the amendment of human Nature.

Nevertheleſs theſe regulations, being the product of man's judgment muſt be liable, and are known in fact to differ much from one another: yet this need not break the unity of the Church, nor abate our Chriſtian charity for all the ſeveral branches of it whereon we do not grow ourſelves, as the hand varying in ſhape from the feet, and the knee lying remote from the forehead, does not deſtroy the unity of the human body, for the whole compoſition

is called an Individual becauſe actuated in all its members by one and the ſame Spirit. In like manner Chriſtians of all denominations, if they mean not to be of Paul, or of Apollos, but of Chriſt, that is, not to place their Salvation in forms and ceremonies and ſpeculative points of belief, but honeſtly to ſearch out the deſign aimed at, and methods of attaining it purſued throughout the Goſpel, will find themſelves actuated by the ſame ſpirit of a ſteddy unboiſterous zeal for advancing daily in the three theological virtues, as being the ſole and certain way of coming to the Father.

39. We have obſerved in a former place, that as in heathen ethics Wiſdom ſtands for that conſummate character poſſeſſing all the virtues, ſo in Chriſtian language, Faith is often employed to expreſs that full degree of perfection attainable in this world. Nevertheleſs when we conſider Faith diſtinctly in its primary ſignification, we ſhall not find it to be the ſaving principal: it gives us an entrance upon our journey, but it is by Hope and Charity that we come to the Father; wherefore love to God and to our neighbour are declared to be the fulfilling of the Law, that is, all the Laws, of Moſes, of Nature, and of the Goſpel. The love of God, as I have endeavoured to ſhew in the Chapter on Charity, is not a love of affection, or deſire of procuring profit or pleaſure to its object, for that we are incapable of

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ever effecting but a filial love of dependance and reſting our expectations upon his Providence, his Wiſdom, his Mercy, and Goodneſs: and this may well be ſtiled Hope.

The glowing Hope of the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, which made them long for their diſſolution that they might be with Chriſt, was neceſſary to ſupport them under the cruel diſtreſſes and perſecutions whereto they were perpetually liable: but to us whom God has bleſſed with a more peaceable ſituation, ſuch an eagerneſs might be miſchievous; as it might beget an impatience which would draw us off from all proper attention to the duties of our ſtation. The love of life is implanted in us for our preſervation, it is unnatural to loath it, and thoſe who would preſs ſuch a diſpoſition of mind as a duty upon their followers, only teach them to diſſemble with themſelves; or if the profeſſion be real, it muſt have become ſo by their being driven into ſuch auſterities and labours of devotion, ſuch a taſteleſſneſs of all innocent enjoyments, ſuch a contempt and averſion for their fellow creatures in the world around them, as has made their lives a burden to them.

Yet we all know, that our lives will not laſt always, and it is no ſmall benefit to have a comfortable proſpect beyond. Our Religion has taught us that this life is preparatory to the next, that all evils befalling in it, other-

wiſe than through our own wilful miſconduct, will terminate in our greater good, and that God has graciouſly furniſhed us with means of making it the preparation for a happy ſtate. Here then is a fit object for calm and ſoothing hope to faſten upon, which may become one of the main ſprings to actuate our motions: we may rejoice in the lawful pleaſures afforded us as being an earneſt of that Bounty from whence we expect greater joys, we may feel a ſenſible ſatisfaction in every right performance of our religious duties, and even of our little offices in common life, which advance us continually onward in the way we wiſh.

And when we conſider, there is one common Father of all, who is no reſpecter of perſons, but good and gracious and equal to all; who has connected the intereſt of his children ſo that the whole body of Chriſt muſt be perfected before any individual member can become compleatly happy; our Hope will grow into univerſal Charity. If we fancy ourſelves poſſeſſed of any extraordinary talents or gifts, we ſhall regard them as depoſits entruſted in our hands to be improved for the benefit of the community, from whoſe advantage alone we can expect to reap any ourſelves: ſo that in labouring the Salvation of others, we labour for our own, and every little good or pleaſure done to our neighbour will in conſequence

quence redound to the doer, Such apprehenſions muſt keep us in perfect charity with all men, not only with the houſhold of Faith, but all others too, without exception even of aliens, worldly-minded, ſenſual, ſlanderers, enemies and perſecutors.

Without a competent mixture of theſe virtues, Faith is an unvailing form, a meer dead carcaſe, like the duſt of the ground when God firſt formed it into a human body: but they are the breath of life, which, being breathed thereinto, make it become a living ſoul, and manifeſt its vigour by continual efforts to puſh forth more fruit of good works than theſe ſublunary climes can ripen.

40. Nevertheleſs Faith, being the foundation whereon to build unto edification, demands the firſt cares of the builder to work it ſtrong. If there were a ſolid bottom of rational conviction this would be the beſt ground to lay the foundation upon: but this not being to be had among the generality, it muſt reſt upon the authority of churches, and creeds, and canons and cuſtoms; like the houſes of Amſterdam, which are reported to ſtand upon piles driven deep into the quagmire. And perhaps the moſt intelligent may not produce ſo firm a ſoil unyielding to preſſure, as to render the expediment of piles needleſs for giving it a greater conſiſtency, that the building above may never ſink, nor ſlide nor totter.

But the corner ſtone is not the whole of a foundation: though Faith in Chriſt be the corner ſtone, he has enjoined us farther in John xiv. to keep his ſayings as the diſtinguiſhing mark of a diſciple or one that loveth him. So then barely believing that Jeſus is Chriſt, the Redeemer, or even believing his ſayings to be true, will not ſuffice without keeping them in mind, and heartily embracing all the articles of faith contained in them, which go to compleat the foundation. It is for infixing this foundation firmly in all its parts that our divine ſervices, aſſemblies, forms and places of worſhip, ceremonies, and other religious inſtitutions have been provided, and times appointed for the repetition of them. For Faith is a ſpecies of perſuaſion, and we know perſuaſions are ſtregthened by forms and cuſtoms, concurrence of numbers, external appearances, and frequently repeating the ſame thing to the ear. Wherefore it is a wrong notion of ſome people, that the reſort to places of devotion is only to learn, and if they do not like the preacher they might as well ſtay away: if they ſhould learn ſomething there, as it is to be hoped they often may, ſo much the better; but the practical benefit is done by helping them to keep the ſayings they had learned aforetime. Then for the buſineſs of learning, I believe many have found experience of greater profit from texts aptly interwoven into a

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diſcourſe, then they could have made by reading over a Chapter in their Bible: for there, as in all other collections of proverbs, apophthegms and dark ſayings, the matters lie ſo thick, that they crowd into confuſion in the thoughts, entangling perpetually with one another, unleſs drawn out into ſeparate threads which the eye can run eaſily along until it reaches one particular point.

From this view of the ſacred offices may be drawn two corollaries. One, that they carry no intrinſic value nor ſanctity in themſelves, but are valuable only for the preſervation and encreaſe of faith they tend to produce; neither is a man the more religious or acceptable in the ſight of God merely for his aſſiduities or fervors in them, but for the proficiency he makes by their aid, in ſtrengthening his faith, and compleating it by addition of the two other virtues. The other concluſion is, that their rectitude and propriety may be tried by obſervation of the effects they work upon the practiſers If Chanting and Organs are found to infuſe a notion into the populace that God almighty is delighted or put into better humour with muſic, they ought certainly to be torn from our ſervices, as a rag of Popery: but if no ſuch fancy is entertained by thoſe who uſe them, who do it only becauſe finding their minds lifted to a greater heartineſs in their devotions when accompa-

nied therewith, why ſhould they be pronounced ſuperſtitious, while contributing to anſwer the main end of divine ſervices, that of working upon the heart? It is as much ſuperſtition to imagine that God will not receive our thankſgivings when offered in an harmonious ſound as that he will not receive them without. For he looks into the ſecret receſſes of the heart and tries the reins, nor is moved this way or that by any undulations of air, whether finely or coarſely modulated. But it is too common for people to judge of others by themſelves: if they have been enured from their childhood to dull forms of devotion and rude ſcreamings, they think every thing ſhocking which is ſhocking to their ears, nor conſidering that they bring with them that caſt of mind, which vitiates the performance. Like perſons who, having contracted a naſuea for the diſhes of foreign countries by being long accuſtomed to others of a contrary ſavour, will pronounce a meat unwholeſome, becauſe it ſets their ſtomachs a kecking.

However ſince the ſame cauſes operate differently upon different ſubjects, and taſtes are known to alter, therefore forms and ceremonies muſt be altered too, to accommodate them to the changes prevailing among a people, for preſerving their efficacy to anſwer the purpoſe intended by them. We may learn from hiſtory, there were ſome which have been actually

ly changed: the love feaſts, the trine immerſion, exorciſm of the devil before baptiſm, practiſed in the primitive times, are now become obſolute; becauſe they would be improper among us, and more likely to prove obſtructions to our Faith, then means of confirming it.

Yet are ſuch changes to be made ſparingly and cautiouſly, as being always attend with ſome inconvenience or hazard: for we muſt remember, that forms derive their weight from their authority, which is mightily ſtrengthened by long uſage. Although no human inſtitutions are like the laws of the Medes and Perſians, which cannot be broken, there requires great judgment and diſcretion to ſee when the miſchiefs of adhering to them are greater, than the inconveniencies of breaking through them, and great management to gain a new cuſtom equal credit with the old ones. When needful, it had better be introduced gently and gradually; for all ſudden revolutions, whether in Church or State, leave a party ſubſiſting to ſtruggle for the reſtoration of what has been aboliſhed.

41. The Goſpel, we have ſeen, proceeds altogether by way of authority and injunction, not of reaſon; by drawing the affections into a holy turn, not by directing the underſtanding how to ſtrike out new diſcoveries in ſcience. From whence ſome have unwarily concluded,

that it and human reaſon are mortal enemies, ſo that every free exerciſe of the latter is a departure from the Faith, the mark of a dangerous character not to be conſorted with it is true, the loudeſt pretenders to reaſon, who take her name in vain, are dangerous perſons, for they deal wholly in cavil, objection, and unſettling the minds of men; but genuine Reaſon teaches her votaries to build up rather than pull down, to gather lights for the diſperſion of darkneſs and confuſion, to aim at ſome improvement of the mind, nor ever to overthrow unleſs when ſome obſtacle ſtands directly in the way of her ſalutary plans. Wherefore it does not follow, that becauſe Religion and Reaſon do not always uſe each others aſſiſtance, (for I hope to ſhow they frequently do,) they muſt act in oppoſition: for they have their diſtinct provinces, make application to different perſons, and aim at different purpoſes not inconſiſtent with one another.

The Goſpel was preached to the poor or the populace, calculated upon their level; it purſues ſolely and ſteadily one point, the advancement of Faith, underſtood in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, as including the two aſſociate virtues; it meddles not with the three branches of Philoſophy, Nature, Logic and Ethics, any farther than while relative to its own deſign; nor interferes in matters of ſpeculation either to recommend or condemn them, but leaves all

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theſe things to thoſe natural lights, which God and Providence have diſtributed among mankind.

There is a remarkable inſtance of this in the caſe of the man born blind, who was miraculouſly brought to his ſight. The Commentators agree, that the doctrine of pre-exiſtence prevailed much among the Jews, eſpecially the Phariſees, and that the queſtion, Was this man born blind for his own ſin or the ſin of his parents? was put in order to draw a deciſion from Jeſus upon that point. Now we cannot ſuppoſe otherwiſe than that he, who came to baniſh all unrighteouſneſs from the thoughts of men, would have declared expreſsly againſt that ſide of the queſtion which had been ſinful. Therefore from his evading a direct anſwer we muſt undoubtedly conclude, that either opinion was a harmleſs but unprofitable opinion, having no immediate connection with the purpoſe of his miſſion; and that a man is not a whit the better Chriſtian for believing or diſbelieving a pre-exiſtent ſtate, but is left at full liberty to judge of it according as his own reaſon ſhall direct him.

The ſame may be ſaid of other ſpeculations, whereon the Scriptures are really ſilent and acknowledged ſo to be by men of the ſoundeſt judgment, although they ſeem to overthrow them by ſpeaking in conformity with the language and ideas of the vulgar. The rotundity of the Earth, its diurnal and annual rotation, the

the Copernican ſyſtem, the gravitation of all bodies even air and flame, ſtill maintain their ground among the orthodox and religious, notwithſtanding texts have been cited in times of ſuperſtition and blind zeal, to prove them impious and heretical.

And there are other ſpeculations ſuppoſed to be proved from Scripture with as little ground as the former were ſuppoſed to be overthrown: ſuch as the identity of the body in ſubſtance ſhape and ſize at the Reſurrection, the winged bodies of Angels, the ſubterraneous place of hell, the reſtoration of Paradiſe, the thouſand years kingdom of Chriſt upon earth, and the like. Theſe things while entertained as ſpeculations, are innocent and may be uſeful, but ought by no means to be contended for as articles of Faith; nor is any thing to be received upon the authority of the Goſpel, unleſs what is neceſſary to ſecure the purity of our ſentiments and manners, the ſole deſign for which it was promulgated. Whatever elſe we find there, is to be eſteemed figurative or hypothetical, partially uſeful, adapted to ſome caſts of imagination for helping their progreſs towards more important points. Thus the ſpeculations laſt mentioned may bring many perſons more readily to conceive the ſurvival of their own perſons after death, the exiſtence of other creatures beſides and ſuperior to the human, the diſmal conſequence of wickedneſs, the reſtoration of

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mankind to the happineſs from whence they are fallen, and that there are gradations of glory, or more ſtages of Being than one, to ſucceed after the preſent: whereas to other perſons perhaps they might prove miſleadings, ſtumbling-blocks, and ſources of endleſs diſpute. Wherefore Figure, Parable and Hypotheſis, whether of ſacred writ or human invention, merit our attention ſo far only as found profitable for edification, while they ſerve as ſcaffolds in raiſing the building of righteouſneſs in opinion and conduct. I have already deſired my hypotheſes in the ſecond Volume might be treated in this manner. If any man finds them open his imagination to a clearer conception of things inviſible, enlarge his idea of the divine Glory, ſtrengthen his hope, and illuſtrate the influence of his preſent conduct in thought, word and deed, upon his future intereſts, they can do him no hurt: but if he ſees them tending to produce contrary effects, let him pronounce them ſtrange, odd and whimſical; he may eaſily overthrow them at a ſtroke with thoſe two invincible arguments, a laugh and an exclamation.

42. Such being the caſe with all ſyſtems both ſacred and profane, which contain matters of univerſal importance, that they mingle ſpeculations therewith of leſs general uſe, ſerviceable only for gaining a reader reception of the former, it requires judgment and conſidera-

tion to diſtinguiſh the one from the other. Whence it appears that Religion and Reaſon are ſo from being belligerent powers, acting in continual oppoſition, that they join in alliance, and give mutual aſſiſtance to each other. For the characteriſtic of a truth to be depended upon is its agreeableneſs to both: ſo that both unite in ſecureing us againſt dangerous errors. When the workings of imagination have led us into ſome concluſion inconſiſtent with the main deſign of the Goſpel, we may be ſure there has been ſome fallacy in the courſe of our reaſonings, which it behoves us to reviſe until we can diſcover wherein they have been faulty: and when the Scriptures ſeem to teach a doctrine contrary to reaſon, we have certainly miſinterpreted them, and ought to ſeek out for a more rational conſtruction.

Many paſſages, not figurative nor hyperbolical, cannot be underſtood without careful exerciſe of our ſagacity and judgment. What will you make of the text, Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven? I know not what the expreſſion might ſignify among the Jews, but with us poorneſs is the ſame as lowneſs of ſpirits, which lies liable to melancholy and deſpondency, and is the ſoil leaſt productive of Hope, one of the three Chriſtian virtues, principally conductive to heaven, as anticipating the joys of it. Or if you underſtand it poor in the graces of the Holy

Holy Ghoſt, ſurely this can never be deemed a qualification for the bleſſedneſs annexed: therefore you muſt hold up the light of reaſon, and conſider the nature of man and the nature of things, before you can diſcern the true ſenſe of the expreſſion.

Nor is the want of reaſon's aid always accidental, occaſioned by change of language and cuſtoms: the Scriptures often vary their own language, and involve matters of different kinds together in the ſame diſcourſe. If ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above. The Reſurrection of Chriſt was a litteral one: that of the Corinthians, who were ſtill alive, could only be metaphorical: But by ceaſing to be Jews or Gentiles they had died to ſin and ſuperſtition; by becoming Chriſtians they were riſen to a life of holineſs, to a new ſet of hopes and deſires, different from thoſe which had given life to their actions before; and they were riſen with Chriſt, becauſe the belief of his Reſurrection had been the means to work their converſion.

The twenty-fourth Chapter of Saint Matthew, together with thoſe of ſimilar purport in the other Evangeliſts, are acknowledged to treat promiſcuouſly of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and end of the world: ſo that it is not eaſy to ſee to which of thoſe great events every particular paſſage relates, nor poſſible to aſcertain, without conſidering the nature of the things

things ſpoken of. That expreſſion of the ſtars falling from heaven will be differently underſtood according to our aſtronomical theory of their being only meteors hanging in the air, or vaſt bodies, much greater than this Earth, ſtationed at an immenſe diſtance. And that of the Son of Man coming in the clouds and gathering his elect from the four quarters of the earth, will receive various interpretations according to the degree of groſsneſs or refinement in our ideas. Beſides that, perhaps this paſſage may not relate to the day of judgment at all, becauſe the gathering is in the next Chapter and other places extended to all nations, including the reprobate as well as the elect.

The Jewiſh and Chriſtian diſpenſations are diſtinguiſhed by the age or world that now is, and that which is to come, by earth and heaven: ſo that the firſt act of faith in the Meſſiah gives immediate entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Salvation denotes ſometimes admittance into the Church, as by Baptiſm; ſometimes being upon the right road by faith; ſometimes the habitual poſſeſſion of that righteouſneſs which is by faith; and ſometimes a future ſtate of happineſs. Son of God is an appellation often given to men: We know not who thoſe Sons of God in the Old Teſtament were, who went in unto the daughters of men and begat giants; but in the New Teſtament the faithful are promiſed to be made the Sons

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of God. Saint Luke proves Jeſus to be ſo by deducing his genealogy from Adam, which was the Son of God. It is ſometimes ſynonymous with the Meſſiah, appropriated to Jeſus on account of his conception by the Holy Ghoſt, or of his union with the Deity; and ſometimes applied to God himſelf, when acting in his ſecond perſon. Spirit has a multitude of ſignifications: it is the perceptive ſubſtance within a man; it is the rational and cogitative faculties, it is a vigour of holineſs actuating the motions; it is the true ſenſe and deſign of a figure or inſtitution, in contradiſtinction to the dead letter or carnal ordinance; It is the wind; for the text tranſlated, Who maketh his Angels Spirits, might as well be rendered, Who maketh the winds his angels or meſſengers; and many learned men hold that the Angel, who deſtroyed the hoſt of Senacherib, was a ſuffocating wind which God ſometimes ſends to make great havoc in hot countries; it is the grace of God ſhed upon our hearts enabling us to do good works, or not unfrequently, the Holy Ghoſt operating to infuſe that grace.

There are many other Scripture terms, as well as thoſe of common language, which change their ſignification according to the ſtations they occupy: therefore it is a fallacious way of arguing to ſtring a number of texts of ſimilar ſound, for it is likely they may contain very diſſimilar ſubſtance. Common ſenſe and

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conſtant uſe will direct us how to underſtand our words in ordinary diſcourſe: but the conſtant uſage of perſons among whom we converſe, will often miſlead and perplex us with reſpect to the language of holy writ; all the variations there cannot be diſcerned, nor reſpectively aſſigned to their proper places without diligent exerciſe of our judgment.

Texts, you ſay, ought to be explained by one another: this I grant the beſt method where it can be had; yet even here the rational faculties and rules of argumentation, practiſed among mankind, are helpful, if not neceſſary, to make the explanation rightly. But when there is a fluctuation of language, or the ſame figure purſued throughout in many paſſages, how ſhall you come at the true ſenſe, or the thing ſignified, without the conſideration of human Nature, and thoſe conceptions of right and wrong, and of the Supreme Being, which moſt men agree in? or if you can find a rational conſtruction, why ſhould it not be eſteemed the true one?

I have endeavoured in the foregoing Sections to give a ſpecimen of what human reaſon may do in alliance with the Goſpel: with what ſucceſs muſt be left to others to judge, but I hope with no miſchievous conſequence. It has been my aim to ſhow, that ſeveral terms of ſacred uſe are figurative, and what they are figurative of, in order to draw the believer from

travelling in a kind of Fairy land, where all is unnatural, myſterious and confuſed; and to reſcue our Holy Religion from that appearance of inconſiſtency, darkneſs and contrariety to reaſon, which has made it a ſtumbling-block to the conſiderate, and a laughing ſtock to the ſcoffer.

43. Nor does our Religion only admit the alliance of human Reaſon to protect and defend it againſt the encroachments of ſuperſtition and abſurdity, but appears purpoſely calculated to exerciſe and excite it. The Law was a compilation of forms and ceremonies to be obſerved reſpectively in their appointed manners and times: ſo the Iſraelite had nothing more to do than open his Peutateuch, and he might ſee there, what was his duty upon every particular occaſion; nothing being left to his diſcretion, there was no call for his judgment to beſtir itſelf at all. But the parabolical and enigmatic ſtile of the Goſpel will not ſuffer our judgment to lie idle a moment: it rouſes us by terrors and the proſpect of a glorious reward, to a deſire of perſevering in the right way; but when we turn over the pages for the ſteps to be taken, we are often preſented with a dead letter; the ſpirit muſt be fetched forth by application, and induſtry, and mature digeſtion. To the running reader ſome precepts are impoſſible, Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven, is perfect; ſome unnatural, Turn the

right cheek to him that has ſmitten you on the left; others contradictory, Take no thought for the morrow, Lay up treaſures for yourſelves in heaven; others impracticable, Sell all thou haſt and give to the poor; for if all were to ſell there could be no buyers.

Such difficulties will occur in all treatiſes on morality and religion, and I believe in none more than in the Goſpel; nor perhaps is there any from which a ſuperficial reader is leſs likely to learn, or, which is worſe, more likely to learn what is not true. It abounds in riddles as I have obſerved before; and a riddle is not deſigned to ſuperſede, but to whet our ſagacity and urge us to an exertion of our natural faculties. The ſolution whereof, when attempted by comparing text with text, requires the painful exerciſe of our underſtanding, and that ſobriety of judgment wherein the perfection of our reaſoning faculty conſiſts. But this method of proceeding by compariſon will not always anſwer the purpoſe: every body knows what various and diſcordant ſyſtems have been ſtricken out among Chriſtians, they all claim to ſtand upon the authority of Scripture, ſtrings of texts are drawn in plenty, and you are exhorted to compare them with one another. How then can you better determine among them, than by collation with that other word of God, which is written in his works, and taking that for the true interpretation of

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the texts which appears the moſt rational, and conſiſtent throughout with your experience of human and external Nature? Nor need you want authority for ſuch procedure, derived from John vii. 17; for if you were ſincerely willing before to do the Will of God upon the beſt information to be gotten from other quarters, you ſhall know of the doctrine whether it come from the ſame Author.

The Papiſt perpetually hits you in the teeth with, This is my body: you cannot confront him with oppoſite texts, for they all, where ſpeaking relatively to this matter, concur in requiring you to eat the fleſh and drink the blood, in declaring that the fleſh is meat indeed and the blood is drink indeed, that the bread which came down from heaven can alone keep you from ſtarving with hunger and thirſt. But being willing to do the Will of God as manifeſted clearly by the natural lights he has given you, you know of the doctrine that it is not from him; for his word can never be underſtood in a ſenſe which ſhall make it abhorrent to reaſon. So the Papiſt is refuted by ſhowing the repugnancy of his doctrine to all our natural lights, the abſurd conſequence of tranſubſtantiation neceſſarily flowing from it, the contradiction of a body exiſting in a thouſand places at once, and by our knowledge of human Nature making it evident, that a particular diet of the body cannot work an amendment of the

mind, which was the ſole deſign of the Goſpel.

That paſſage, Verily I ſay unto You, that this generation ſhall not paſs until all theſe things be done, was generally underſtood among the primitive Chriſtians as relating to the ſecond coming of Chriſt; therefore they expected it year after year, and Saint Paul expreſſes himſelf, We who are alive ſhall be caught up in the clouds together with the reſurgents. And it is not by compariſon with other paſſages, but by our knowledge of events, that we now unanimouſly refer that declaration to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

The Scripture gives general rules which cannot be particularized for practice without a knowledge drawn from other funds: therefore are to be regarded as Theſes for putting the mind into profitable trains of meditation and enquiry. It propoſes ſubjects to our conſideration, but often leaves it to ourſelves what lights we ſhall ſtrike out, what deductions we ſhall draw therefrom. It reſtrains what Saint Paul calls the vain babblings of Philoſophy, but encourages Philoſophy when ſhe can talk pertinently for illuſtrating or enforcing the matters it ſuggeſts to her contemplation. Accordingly we may obſerve, that Philoſophy runs in a ſounder, ſteadier, more wholeſome channel in the Chriſtian world than it uſed to do in ancient times, and the human ſciences have been made

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ſerviceable to advance the purpoſes of the Goſpel. Aſtronomy diſplays the magnificence, the glory, the power of our Creator: Metaphyſics help us to underſtand the ſpiritual eſſence of our ſouls, the dominion of Providence over free agents, the independence of the ſoul upon a corporeal frame for its exiſtence: the ſtudy of Man leads to the right underſtanding, and manifeſts the expedience of the doctrines and precepts delivered in holy writ: the ſtudy of Nature diſcovers the inertneſs of matter, thereby proving that fundamental article, the Being of a God; and diſplays his ſtupendous Wiſdom conſpicuous in the wonderful variety, and regularity of her courſes: and I flatter myſelf ſome imperfect ſketches may be found in the foregoing work, whereby it is ſhown that the inveſtigations of human reaſon are applicable to the ſervices of Religion.

Chriſt has declared that he came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil; by which we cannot underſtand the ceremonial law, for that he did aboliſh, but the moral, the ſame wherein Saint Paul tells us, the Gentiles were a law unto themſelves; for God left not himſelf without a witneſs, having diſplayed his eternal Power and Godhead in the works of the Creation; whereof Man was not the work of leaſt importance to be known by Man. The words of Chriſt himſelf do not always profit without a knowledge of human Nature: he has ſaid the

Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath, but he has not directed in what particular manner Man ſhould make his uſes of it. Therefore we muſt preſume it was upon obſervation on the wants of mankind requiring ſome rule to guide their diſcretion in the diſpoſal of their time, that the firſt diſciples appropriated a certain day in the week for religious exerciſes, and abſtinence from all ſecular employments.

44. Nevertheleſs it muſt be owned, that Religion and Reaſon too often do hurt to one another, when like other allies they conſult their ſeparate intereſts preferably to the general; not conſidering that the ſtrength of a confederacy lies in unanimity, fidelity, mutual confidence, and ſteady attachment to the common cauſe. Now the common cauſe of both I apprehend to be the amendment of human Nature, which the one endeavours to effect by ſhowing men what makes for their good, the other by ſtirring up a zeal to purſue it. But knowledge without zeal is a lifeleſe carcaſe, it has eyes to ſtare with, but no hands to execute: and zeal without knowledge is a wild colt, that keeps galloping about but makes no way upon the road. When ceaſing to act in alliance, the fondneſs for knowledge damps the ardor of zeal; and zeal hurries on with an impetuoſity incapable of looking about: therefore their partizans, being ſenſible of this, entertain a continual jealouſy of one another.

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The Rationaliſt ſuſpects every exhortation to read the Goſpel as a deſign to enſnare him, to debar him the uſe of thought, to keep him in ignorance that he may be ductile and governable, and looks upon every ſerious countenance as a mark of folly and weakneſs: his vanity makes him forward to ſhow his opinion of others, thereby obſtructing the progreſs of reaſon by ſetting people againſt it. The zealot ſuſpects every man who preſumes to doubt, to examine, to argue, of being a concealed infidel, a ſecret underminer of things ſacred, he abhors the like practices himſelf, and ſcorns all explanation or human reaſoning; thereby betraying his Religion by running into groſs extravagancies and palpable abſurdities, which give an eaſy victory to the adverſary.

They are ſo averſe they will not ſuffer the ſame language to be ſpoken among them: you cannot mention the words Righteouſneſs or Sanctity in one company without being thought a canting creature, that loves to talk without a meaning: nor Rectitude or Virtue in another, but you are preſently judged a Freethinker. Now I would fain know, where is the difference between the Sanctity of manners aſcribed to Marcia in Addiſon's Cato, and that character which Solomon expreſſes by a virtuous woman; or between Rectitude and Righteouſneſs, when thoroughly underſtood. But this both parties ſeem reſolved not to do; ſo Rec-

titude remains appropriated to one miſtaken notion, and Righteouſneſs to another. Methinks it would be worth while for each to penetrate into the others ideas, and learn his language, were it only for the ſake of making converts: for how can you refute a man unleſs you underſtand him? becauſe elſe you can never know wherein the error lies that you would convince him of.

And herein I think the Rationaliſt more blameable than the Devotee, becauſe being generally a man of more learning and thought, he is better maſter of language, and better able to veſt his ideas in any cloathing; and he cannot forget the advantage of appearing in a dreſs agreeable to the company. I muſt not exhort him to become all things to all men, if by any means he may gain ſome; becauſe that being an expreſſion of Parſon Paul, he would ſuſpect me of prieſtcraft: but he muſt ſee, from the nature of the thing, that if he can contrive to deliver his own thoughts in Scripture terms, he will be heard with better attention and better profit. Words are but ſounds that will take any meaning affixed to them; and ſtiles are only tunes whereto very different odes may be ſet. I have ſhewn him juſt now that I can conform myſelf to the jocular ſtile of the Freethinker, yet be ſerious all the while. Why then ſhould he be affrighted at the letters G, R, A, C, E? they

they are harmleſs inoffenſive characters, ſuſceptible either of a ſolid, or ſuperſtitious meaning. If then he can affix a rational ſenſe to the term, he will be better able to lead the wanderer by gentle windings into a juſtneſs of thought, than by uſing a language unfamiliar to his ear.

45. The method of rational explanation is preferable to that of oppoſition, yet is that method to be purſued with caution, ſo far only as the ſubjects can bear it; for there are ſome tempers in whom familiarity breeds contempt: they cannot follow the long deduction of conſequences by which meaſures are ſhown to be expedient, but the line muſt be ſhortened for them, and they muſt be prevailed upon to take the meaſures by authority and reverence. But obſcurity and myſtery often add a ſacredneſs to things: therefore I do not know whether the illuſtrations herein before attempted of ſeveral important Scripture doctrines may be ſerviceable to every body. It has been remarked already, that if all men would live up invariably to the deciſions of their judgment, we ſhould have a happy world; but then it muſt be their own judgment, ſuch as they are capable of framing: this then is the principal point to be driven at, and new lights to be thrown in only as we find them in a diſpoſition to follow them.

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Therefore it will be beſt to leave men to their own notions of Atonement, Satisfaction, Interceſſion, and the like, while they ſee no inconſiſtencies there, and are not led thereby into imaginations deſtructive of their own peace of mind, or detrimental to the Society they live in; and to ſtand upon the watch in readineſs to clear up any difficulties that may perplex them, or check any deviations that might turn them into pernicious trains of ſentiment or conduct.

For the ſame form of doctrine will not ſuit every age and country, nor every claſs of men in the ſame country alike. In times of ignorance and inconſiderate activity, a mixture of what would be ſuperſtition to us is neceſſary: for I have ſaid in a former place that ſuperſtition is relative, the groſſeſt ideas being not ſuch to him who is capable of entertaining no better. The leaſt ſenſe of Religion cannot be maintained without a perſuaſion of the divine dominion continually over us: this the man of contemplation diſcerns in the courſe of Nature, for he knows that her works are the works of God, who gave her powers and planned her operations with exact knowledge of every minuteſt event they ſhould produce, ſo he ſees God continually before him in the productions of ſecond cauſes. But the plain man cannot comprehend this; therefore we muſt permit him to imagine frequent interpoſitions

poſitions in the growth of corn, the changes of weather, the actions of mankind, or he will think himſelf abandoned to the neceſſary agency of matter and motion, or the caprices of chance.

46. Therefore it would become the Rationaliſt, who complains ſo loudly of the headineſs and haſtineſs of zeal, to beware of falling into the like error himſelf, and not be to haſty in eradicating the evil weed of ſuperſtition, before he has examined whether the roots of corn be not ſo intermatted with it, that he ſhall pluck up both together. But perhaps it is not an evil weed in the ſoil where it grows: it may be not ſuperſtition, but a compendious method of apprehending that which a narrow imagination cannot contain at large, a joining the act of God with the productions of Nature or Fortune, when the eye is not ſtrong enough to run along the line of ſecond cauſes between a figurative repreſentation by ſenſible images of things that cannot be comprehended in the abſtract.

And let him keep an eye upon another plant which ſometimes proves a noxious weed, and that is the habit of jeſting and ridicule: for if a ſacred dread makes one heady, a fondneſs for wit makes one giddy. Both are ſerviceable in a certain degree, but miſchievous when redundant, when not managed with diſcretion and confined to their proper places;

for it is not uncommon that the ſame plants deſerve cultivation in one place, but require weeding out from another. We ſow fields of Oats with care and coſt, but are very ſorry to ſee them among our wheat: the ſcarlet poppy and ſun-reſembling marigold, which burn up our corn, are eſteemed ornaments in our gardens: the carpet-woven graſs that beautifies our lawns, muſt be extirpated from our fallows by frequent and toilſome ploughings.

But ſuperſtition is not always a diſtinct plant, it is ſometimes like the green leaves of corn, which protect and aſſiſt to draw up nouriſhment into the ſpire, and will wither away of themſelves as that grows towards maturity. Therefore a mixture of it, more than we ſhould think needful for our own uſe, is profitable to young perſons, as it ſerves to reſtrain the Sallies of Youth, eſtabliſhes ſalutary perſuaſions, before they can diſcern ſolid grounds to build them upon, and will give way and fall off in proportion as reaſon expands; nay it helps in the mean while to render her veſſels more compact, and ſtrengthen their tone by a little preſſure requiring their continual exertion to overcome it.

The like may be ſaid with reſpect to young nations which commonly begin in ignorance, rudeneſs, barbariſm, and total diſregard to all virtues not bearing a viſible reference to military

military merit. Therefore the ancient legiſlators and founders of ſtates have always dealt much in myſtery and ſacred rite. And the primitive Fathers in the earlieſt ages of Chriſtianity, as I have been informed by citations from their remains, for I have no perſonal acquaintance among them, practiſed exorciſms, unctions, ſignatures of the croſs, and luſtrations by holy water. Perhaps the inventions of Popery, before it was ſtrained up to an abſolute dominion over perſons, goods and thoughts, might be needful to ſpread and enforce Religion, and give air for the ſeeds of Reaſon to bud forth. Were the times of our Saxon anceſtors renewed upon this land, how glad ſhould we peaceable folks be to have an aſylum in ſome monaſtery under protection of Saint Mary or Saint Peter, or even, of Saint Almanachius, provided he had the reputation of working miracles and ſetting the Devil upon all who ſhould preſume to invade his ſanctuary, where we might give full play to our rational faculties in quiet, without perpetual hazard of murder or rapine, or the terrors and ravages of war. Even the mumbling over Pater-noſters and Ave Mary's was ſome ſubmiſſion to diſcipline and lifting the thought to things above, which though little enough, ſtill was better than none: nor could the obſervation, that the greateſt droppers of beads were often the worſt men, fail to put

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ſome perſons upon reflection, and enquiring wherein the real eſſence of Religion conſiſted, which might open the paſſage for a little glimpſe of the true deſign in the coming of Chriſt.

But now, God be thanked, the world is more enlightened, ſo that we want not ſo much of the fiery meteor enwrapt in clouds and darkneſs. The Reformation has opened away for the advancement of uſeful ſcience and the exerciſe of ſober unlicentious freedom of thought: whereby the minds of men have been widened to take a larger proſpect and obſerved the ſymmetry and connection prevailing among the ſeveral parts of it, made more attentive to rational explanation, and capable of receiving it; ſo that we can now trace the hand of God through the channel of his Providence from remote diſtances, without the neceſſity of imagining it conſtantly cloſe to us. Nevertheleſs at all times and in all communities there will be minds of very various ſizes, ſome contracted by their natural debility, and others by the neceſſary attention to their profeſſions or ſituations in life: therefore myſtery and unexplained obligation cannot be totally diſcarded. Pythagoras had his Tetrachty, his myſtic numbers, his ſymbols. Socrates his Demon, and Tully his ſyſtem of auguries: which though rational doctrines in their own minds, yet as underſtood,

ſtood by vulgar apprehenſions, we ſhould eſteem highly ſuperſtitious.

47. Nor can we ſtill avoid all ambiguity and equivocal language, which exhibits a very different ſcene of thought to different imaginations. All ſciences and profeſſions have their technical terms, their ſeveral rules of proceeding and modes of inſtruction, unintelligible except to the practiſer: law, phyſic, mathematics, even commerce, manufacture, and the mechanic arts, are not without their myſteries; nor does polities abound in them the leaſt of any. In popular aſſemblies the orator does not always give you the true reaſons for the meaſure he would perſuade you to follow, he prefers ſuch as he judges moſt likely to prevail; and herein he acts honeſtly, provided the ultimate end of his aim be honeſt; for in this caſe the end crowns the work. If indeed he would bring you to his own point for ſerving his private intereſts under ſpecious pretence of the public good, I have nothing to ſay in his juſtification; but if his point be ſalutary, it is laudable to employ the moſt effectual means of attaining it, although they ſhould be very different from thoſe which had prevailed upon himſelf to deſire it.

In like manner it behoves the diſcourſer upon religious matters to conſider the importance of his principal point in view, and then

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to conduct thoſe to whom he addreſſes along ſuch tracks in their imagination as he ſhall find practicable, taking good caution that in his neceſſary deviations from the ſolid road of reaſon, he does not tear up the ground of any croſs paths whereby they might be debarred acceſs to ſome other point equally important: for Tully adviſes to be guarded on all quarters, and attentive to do the cauſe no detriment through eagerneſs to ſerve it.

But there are many ſubordinate points tending in order ſucceſſively to one another, and it is of importance to diſtinguiſh the intermediate from the ultimate: which to do requires a piercing eye to reach through the whole line, and an extenſive judgment to take in the plan of all their connections. There is a multitude of labourers in the vineyard, as well volunteers in diſſertations and eſſays, as retained ſervants entered upon the ſtewards roll: and it cannot be expected they ſhould all have an equal quickneſs of optics or compaſs of underſtanding; nor is it needful. For a very few merchants ſuffice to import the heavenly wares from the countries producing them, the Scriptures and the fields of Nature: it is the retailer and petty ſhop keeper, diſperſed every where, that muſt ſupply the demands of the public. Importation is not their buſineſs, but to reſort to the warehouſe, and retail out the goods as received from thence:

thence: only taking care to enquire the general character of the merchant they deal with, for ſome have been known to put falſe marks upon their bales, being impoſed upon by mixtures of things manufactured in the regions of ambition, avarice, contention, vanity and ſelf-conceit. The misfortune is that we cannot eaſily know the ſize of our talents, we are apt to fancy ourſelves merchants when by no means qualified for foreign correſpondence: like the little Frenchman ſqueezed up in a ſhop of twelve feet by ſix, who calls himſelf merchant of ſnuff, merchant of ſoap and candles, and card-matches. Our London company of taylors have a better title to the dignity of merchant by their magnificent hall, capacious to hold all the lords governors of India in general ſynod aſſembled.

Yet I do not wiſh any one to follow implicitly his rules or his precedents: let him uſe ſuch ſagacity and judgment as he has, and make the beſt improvement he can by them with caution and ſobriety. If he can penetrate into the reaſons and tendencies of his rules this will keep him to the ſpirit of them, and enable him to apply them more effectually to particular occaſions. And for ſuch as are qualified to diſcern the whole rationale of the Goſpel, and lay it out upon a regular plan mutually connected in all its parts, they cannot do better than exerciſe their talents that

way. I have contributed my endeavours for the benefit of thoſe among them who may want aſſiſtance, or induſtry, or leiſure, or perhaps may profit by my miſtakes: for the diſcovery of an error is one great avenue into truth, which elſe one might never have thought of, or never apprehended needful to beſtow any pains upon.

It can do no man hurt to be fully maſter of his ſcience, with all its uſes, particular purpoſes to be anſwered by it, and manners of operation in effecting them; whatever he may communicate to other people: not that I would ſuppoſe him niggard of his treaſures, nor grudging any fellow creature the benefit of all he has to beſtow, but obſervant of what each ſubject is capable of receiving, and keeping to himſelf whatever he ſees would do miſchief to another. For what is one man's meat is another man's poiſon: wherefore the characters of men muſt be ſtudied, and diſcretion uſed to diſtribute what is ſuitable to the digeſtion and temperament of the receivers.

I do not hold it needful in theſe days, and if not needful ſurely not allowable, to raiſe any miſapprehenſions purpoſely; but people will run into them inadvertently. When taught ſome important truth or ſalutary practice, they will be adding imaginations of their own, concerning the grounds ſupporting

ing the one, or effects immediately produced by the other. I have met with perſons who believed the ſoul immaterial becauſe we dream in our ſleep: and multitudes ſtand perſuaded that the water of baptiſm directly waſhes the ſpiritual part from the corruption derived through Adam. The injudicious zealot, who proceeds by rote and rule without knowing why, encreaſes ſuch-like miſtakes; for he has fallen into them himſelf, and will defend them againſt every one, who attempts to ſet him right, by ſtrings of detached texts and calling him heretic or infidel. The injudicious admirer of reaſon, who takes it to lie ſolely in criticiſm, overthrows them with might and main, never reflecting what farther ruins he may cauſe to follow thereby.

48. But the man of diſcretion uſes his eyes to look around, regarding connections and conſequences as well as ſingle objects. Where he finds truth ſupported by error, he ſpares the latter for ſake of the former: not out of fondneſs for ſuch kind of ſupport, but until he can provide a better by working up the ſolid wall, which requires time and patience to lay the ſtones one by one as you can get them into their places. He knows that overthrow is a very improper method of edification: for ſpiritual building is the very reverſe of common maſonry: you muſt begin on top, and work downwards. The learner muſt have

a bed to lie upon in the firſt place, ſo you muſt contrive him garrets before he can think of the other conveniences of a family: he cannot ſuſpend his action until fully inſtructed, but muſt purſue ſome tenour of conduct immediately, and be doing before he is knowing; therefore you muſt urge him with rules, and watch opportunities for leting him into the reaſons afterwards. In the mean while he will find reaſons for himſelf as he can catch them at hap hazard: theſe our diſcerning artificer conſiders as ſhorings to ſuſtain the upper ſtory, and knows that to overthrow them all at once muſt occaſion a terrible downfall: ſo he lets them alone, and goes on calmly with his building down to the chambers and loweſt foundation, well knowing the ſlanting ſhores will ſucceſſively drop of themſelves as the ſuperincumbent preſſure is taken off by having a firmer ſupport to reſt upon.

No work can be performed in a maſterly manner without continually keeping in view the principal deſign, and the plan of operation for effecting it: now we have ſeen the deſign of the Goſpel was to rectify the Sentiments, and gain an entire dominion for the rational faculties over the ſenſitive; and the method employed for this end is by name and authority. For the perfection of the mind conſiſts in a ſoundneſs of judgment, and the perfection of human Nature in a due ſubordination of the inferior

inferior powers thereto: but authority is the moſt effectual means to counterbalance the impulſes of appetite, and keep the mind attentive to profitable objects; for One may judge rightly upon trifles, yet the judgment is not ſound unleſs the matters exerciſed upon are ſolid and availing. Therefore the principal care to be taken is to preſerve this authority in full vigour, and point it from time to time upon the ſervices wanted; to be cautious of weakening it by overſtraining, or waſting it upon matters of no moment, or of miſchievous tendency.

The Sum of our duty may be comprized in two words, Bear and Forbear: this a ſenſe of authority and obligation, when ſtrong and lively, can alone enable us to do; our knowledge of their expedience can never raiſe deſire enough to carry us through the taſk. But endurance and forbearance are not duties in themſelves: we were created to enjoy our Being, not to live in continual ſuffering and abſtinence, which are then only recommendable when they will ſecure us from greater ſuffering, or work an improvement of our happineſs: ſo that we want ſome direction when to ſubmit to them.

49. This direction the Goſpel affords, informing us what to bear and forbear, not in every particular caſe, which would be impracticable and hurtful, like thoſe tomes of ca-

ſuiſtry that have burthened the world in former ages; but by the great examplar of Chriſt, by the behaviour of his firſt diſciples, and by general precepts, which inſtead of taking off the trouble of thinking for ourſelves excite us to undergo it, and lead our thoughts into profitable trains whereby we may apply thoſe directions to our particular occaſions. It contains likewiſe certain matters of ſpeculation, neceſſary to eſtabliſh its authority and regulate our opinions, without which the contents ſpoken of before, could not have proved effectual, becauſe it is well known how much our opinions influence our actions. I need inſtance only in the belief of a Reſurrection and future judgment, which is the grand ſpring or primum mobile of what cares we do take in ſhaping our conduct.

Both theſe ſyſtems will take very various forms and colours in the imaginations of different perſons: they will run into miſapprehenſions and miſtakes concerning them, which it behoves ſuch as are able, to obviate, or cure as far as practicable without injury to the ſounder parts. For circumſpection is needful here: the ſhoe muſt be ſuited to the foot; the diet accommodated to the conſtitution and temperature of the body. Saint Paul tells us there is meat for men and milk for babes, which is a caution to conſult digeſtions in providing for the ordinary. The ſtomachs of

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our remote forefathers ſeem to have been very weak, their vigour running all into their muſcles, which made them ſuch fighting fellows: the Reformation helped to encreaſe the concoctive powers conſiderably; and the allowance to liberty of conſcience and ſober argumentation has I think ſtill farther ſtrengthened the digeſtion among our people in general. Wherefore it muſt be injudicious to adhere too ſtrictly to forms of expreſſion uſed in old conſtitutions and articles, for this is bringing us back to our pap again: and thoſe Creeds and Catechiſms are beſt which are moſt ſimple and conciſe, becauſe they will bear digeſting into different nutritious Juices ſuch as the body ſhall require, and preſerve an external conformity notwithſtanding a variety of inward ſentiments.

Yet robuſt as we may think ourſelves, there are ſtill many gradations of vigour amongſt us, which require as many various aliments, from the whey, the milk, the ſtrong broths, the chicken, the veal, up to the ſalted buttock: and ſometimes the craving is not ſatisfied with meats alone, for as the Oſtrich helps her digeſtion by ſwallowing ſtones which would deſtroy it in the human kind, ſo to ſome few perſons, who, like animals of the winged tribe, have corneous ſtomachs, the niceties of abſtraction and knotty ſpeculations, though not meat themſelves, aſſiſt them in grinding their meat. All which makes it difficult to know how to

deal with people: for if you offer a viand ever ſo little ſofter than their accuſtomed diet, they are affronted at your treating them like children, and deſpiſe you for an enthuſiaſt; if ever ſo little ſtronger, they think you have a deſign to circumvent them, and deteſt you for an infidel. And in diſcourſes given out to public inſpection, it is not always eaſy to eſcape the hazard of being accounted bigot and freethinker, for the ſame performance. I have already been told my two firſt volumes have been ſuſpected of freethinking, and am under ſome tremors leſt, if this third volume ſhould ever go forth, it may draw upon me a contrary charge: but I am not conſcious of any change in ſentiment; I ſeem to myſelf to have delivered the ſame ſubſtance all along, only tranſlated into the two different languages of Philoſophy and Scripture.

Another difficulty ſprings from the indiſcretion of others; there are folks with whom ſubſtantial meat might not diſagree, yet you dare not truſt them with it, becauſe they are like a child that is fond of telling all it knows, and would divulge a taſte you deſire to conceal becauſe it might draw ſome ignorant perſon to ſwallow an unwholeſome food: I have formerly played at back-gammon on Sundays one hand againſt tother; I never do it now becauſe I do not like it, but ſhould make no ſcruple of doing it: yet ſhould ſcruple to play with any body

body elſe, for fear he might tattle, or we be overheard; not, for ſake of gaining the character of a righteous Man, but for the ſame reaſon Saint Paul gives for adviſing his pupils to abſtain from things they were told had been offered to idols.

50. To make the Religion within us compleat, we muſt ſtudy not only what ſentiments and practices belong to the eſſence of Religion, but likewiſe what there is in the ways of the world coming neareſt to it. For the deſign of the Goſpel is very extenſive, no leſs than the amendment of the human race: and as there are various degrees of amendment to be worked in this life, and various modes of preparation for the next, it regards aliens and ſtrangers as well as the houſhold of Faith. The force of ſympathy and intercourſe are well known, whereby the Religion of ſome may caſt a tincture of its colours upon many to whom it cannot diffuſe the ſubſtance. Our Hopes are in Heaven, but the means of attaining them are by univerſal Charity to our fellow creatures upon earth, by contributing to the happineſs of mankind, which conſiſts in Health, Peace and Competence in their fulleſt latitude, as deſcribed in the firſt Chapter of this volume.

Therefore let us ſtand ever watchful to do the ſervice that is feaſible; if we cannot make a man a good Chriſtian, let us try to make him a good Heathen, a good Jew, a good Free-thinker,

thinker, or at leaſt free from diſquietudes or turbulent paſſions in his own mind, and a uſeful member of ſociety: though we ſhould not be able to infuſe the peculiar articles of our own belief, ſtill it is a point gained if we can infuſe thoſe of natural Religion, or public ſpirit, or common prudence, reſulting therefrom, by any abſtractions, argumentations, exhortations, or other methods moſt likely to ſucceed.

But there is a ſaying, Phyſician cure thyſelf, which we may take for an admonition to begin at home, and lay down our own plan of conduct for the lower offices of life as well as the higheſt, that the whole may be uniform, all the parts aptly joining in concert with one another. For we cannot confine our attention ſolely to religious matters: ſome of us who have great leiſure may employ it that way more frequently, but we cannot all, nor can any of us always be labouring in the vineyard; for there are the fields, the meadows, the markets, that demand our ſervices elſewhere. God has called us, by the condition of our bodies and circumſtances of ſituation wherein we are placed by his Providence, to cares for our health, for our ſubſiſtence, for our families, for the duties of our profeſſion, and even for the recreation and amuſement of one another: and in all theſe we muſt guide ourſelves by certain rules of ſobriety, propriety and diſcretion, deduced remotely

motely from thoſe of our Religion; or elſe we may prove a ſcandal to it, and whatever light may be within us will not ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee any thing thereby for which to glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

51. Then for mankind in general, you cannot expect to inſtil much of your ſyſtem into them: many are drawn out of your reach by avocations of providing for their neceſſary ſubſiſtence, by their trades and voyages, and by the magic circle of Faſhion whirling them perpetually in a giddy round of unavailing trifles; many pre-occupied by ſome ruling paſſion for wealth, or fame, or preferment, or popularity. And it is fitting that things ſhould be ſo: the ſupply of conveniences for life require it, the keeping up of chearfulneſs and activity among the indolent require it, commerce and the public ſervice require it: but theſe avocations afford admiſſion to a very ſlender pittance, or a few careleſs thoughts of Religion. If you can get a little into them, the more the better, but you muſt proceed diſcreetly, watching favourable opportunities; for they are ſeldom diſpoſed to hear you, or preſently cloyed, and if you go to importune them longer or in another manner than they like, you diſguſt them and will never get their ear afterwards.

I would not in this place remind you of the caution given to beware of throwing your pearls before ſwine; for that is a word of contempt,

tempt, and many of thoſe who would refuſe your pearls are perſons of no contemptible character, but certainly it is waſte to throw any thing valuable where it would be left upon the ground: you had better preſent them with ſomething ſuitable to their reliſh, which may turn to good account in their hands.

If Saint Paul reſolved to know nothing ſave Chriſt and him crucified, it was becauſe he was an Apoſtle called ſolely to the functions of that ſacred office, which lay in magnifying the name of Chriſt, ſpreading his authority and inculcating his doctrines; but we are not ſo appropriated; we ſtand in a lower ſtation wherein the acquiſition of other knowledge will be ſerviceable, called to every office of Chriſtian Charity, or from which a profit may redound of any ſort, or any where among mankind.

It has been ſhown in the Chapter on Oeconomy, that Providence employs the ſciences, the arts, the purſuits, the opinions, guiding the courſe of affairs relative only to this world, to co-operate with Religion and Philoſophy towards perfecting the human race. Many of them have received improvement from men of little Religion and wicked lives, ſome of whom have been found eminently inſtrumental in advancing the intereſts of Religion: as witneſs that great bleſſing, the Reformation, which was not owing to the piety or virtues of the Monarch. For God uſes evil things, and

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things indifferent, to bring forth good: it would be impious in us to do evil that good might come of it, becauſe we cannot know when it will produce that conſequence, therefore ought never to encourage it; but it is highly commendable in us to raiſe what good we find feaſible from thoſe evils we cannot help, or from things indifferent, and to concur with men of private views in working a benefit which was not their motive, and advancing a good purpoſe whereof they had not the leaſt knowledge or conception.

52. I have now gone through my ſcheme from the roots to the ſmalleſt branches ſprouting therefrom. The Rationaliſt cannot complain of me for amuſing him with an unintelligible language and myſtery: for he muſt ſee it has been my aim all along to unravel myſteries, to find a clear ſenſe of expreſſions he may have thought unintelligible, and to ſhow the ſcheme of the Goſpel conformable in its moſt eſſential parts with that of ſound Philoſophy. The only difficulty he can boggle at is, that of Nature being made imperfect ſo as to need the helping hand of its Creator to make it anſwer the purpoſe intended in the original plan, and the Union of the Deity with Man: and for that I have prepared him, in the Sections above cited in my Chapter on Providence. That ſtumbling block once gotten over, he will find all beyond run ſmoothly in a regular chain of conſequences.

ſequences. But if he have an invincible repugnance againſt all ſupernatural interpoſition whatever, I can only ſend him back to my Chapter on divine Oeconomy, where it has been attempted to do all that can be done for Chriſtianity, conſidered as an event eminently providential, without aid of miracle, or any thing divine deſcending from above.

With reſpect to the orthodox, I am only apprehenſive leſt they ſhould eſteem the very unveiling of myſtery indiſcreet, becauſe obſcurity adds to the ſacredneſs of an object. I know it does ſo in many caſes, but times and countries muſt be conſulted, and it ſeems to deſerve mature conſideration, whether the keeping ourſelves involved in clouds and darkneſs in the preſent age be not more likely to weaken, than fortify the authority of a doctrine. I hope there is nothing in the whole of this Chapter detrimental to the Chriſtian Religion as taught in our Church, but flatter myſelf there are ſome hints at leaſt which may prove helpful towards a rational, yet orthodox explanation of ſome of the moſt difficult and important doctrines. Thoſe hints I have been enabled to give by my examination into human Nature, the proper ideas of Subſtance, Identity, Individuality, Union, and other ſpeculations diſcerned by the light of Nature: which then will appear to have been objects well deſerving my labours in the purſuit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Divine Services.

IN the four preceding Chapters we have found frequent uſe for the Teleſcope, having diſtant objects and ſpacious ſcenes, no leſs than thoſe of univerſal Nature and the fortunes of the whole human ſpecies, to contemplate. We have endeavoured to obſerve the ways of heaven in the conduct of affairs among mankind from the beginning of recorded time, and by their bearings to diſcover the ultimate point whereto they tend. We have looked backward and forward tracing the ſeveral lines in the plan of Providence, ſo far as God has been pleaſed to lay them within the graſp of human comprehenſion; which we have ſeen can hold enough to diſplay their ſymmetry and proportion, and to ſhew them correſpondent parts of one great and gracious deſign. Reſearches which were not the wanton excurſions of vain curioſity or unavailing ſpeculation, but may turn to good profit by making us more ſenſible of the Goodneſs and Equity of our almighty Governor, alike beneficent to all his creatures; better ſatisfied with the lot of our exiſtence, admitting us to our full ſhare of his in-

inexhauſtible Bounty; better contented under evils we feel or behold, as being ſooner or later productive of an incomparably greater advantage to the ſufferer.

We then reviewed the ſtupendous ſcheme by the light of the Goſpel, which diſcovered to us wheel within wheel, and intricacies of Wiſdom undiſcerned before. For it appeared now that the Pantology of ſecond cauſes had been purpoſely drawn imperfect to leave room for the Divine interpoſitions: Man being made in weakneſs, by which he would undoubtedly fall into perpetual miſery, nor was there any remedy provided among the laws of Nature for his deliverance. But God in his eternal counſels had prepared a remedy, by an exertion of his Omnipotence, whereon he eſtabliſhed a plan of Soterialogy for the reſtoration and perfection of human Nature, to be advanced by gradual progreſs from the foundations of this Earth through the next ſtage of Being, and until the final conſummation of all things.

But thoſe large ideas are too ſpacious for every imagination to contain, and too refined for every palate to reliſh, nor where they do find entrance and reception can they continue long in full ſtrength of impreſſion, or vividneſs of colour: for the neceſſary attention to our bodily wants, to the common buſineſs of life, our troubles, our paſſions and importunate deſires, caſt a veil around, confining our view to the

the little ſpot before us, nor can we raiſe a concern for any thing beyond the preſent moment or occurrencies of the paſſing day. A man in pain or ſickneſs has no ſpirits to handle the Teleſcope, and in the hurry of buſineſs, pleaſure or company, has not a thought to ſpare for the Mundane Soul, or laws of univerſal Nature.

Therefore we muſt uſe management with ourſelves, and endeavour to work by art what we could not compaſs by the ſtrength of reaſon; ſtriving to imprint in laſting characters upon the imagination ſo much of our contemplative ſcenes as her coarſe canvaſs can take off, that is, the concluſions reſulting therefrom, which when well inculcated make the eſſence of Faith, and Hope, and Charity. For we may have a lively ſenſe of the Power, the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs of God, when we have not in diſplay before us the particulars whereby thoſe Attributes are manifeſted: we may have an unreſerved truſt in his Mercy, an acquieſcence in every diſpenſation, a content under evils befalling us without an actual diſcernment of the manner wherein they operate to our good: we may have a cordial benevolence to our fellow creatures without an immediate apprehenſion of the connections whereby their intereſt are linked with our own. If thoſe ſentiments can be fixed upon the imagination by the clear and full convictions of our underſtanding, I con-

ceive they are likely to be moſt durable; yet whatever way we can get them to take ſtrong hold there, is well worth the purſuing.

For it may be remembered that the mechanical motions among our ideas bear a large proportion to thoſe excited by premeditated deſign. Imagination is the ſeat of our perſuaſions, conductor for the moſt part of our actions, and often the employer of our underſtanding. It is like a houſe clock, which may be ſet right now and then by hand upon careful obſervation of other regulators, but ordinarily is itſelf the regulator of all buſineſs in the family. And this faculty depends altogether upon the condition of our internal machinery, which is affected by habit, cuſtom, external appearance and ſenſible objects. Theſe things then judiciouſly applied, may bring it to run ſpontaneouſly for a continuance in thoſe trains, which the moſt exalted exerciſes of our underſtanding can only throw it into for a while.

2. Moſt of us, as remarked in the laſt ſection of Chapter XX, who live in a private ſtation with no more than common abilities, rarely meet with opportunities of doing an important ſervice either to Religion, or the public, or our neighbours: therefore our buſineſs lies almoſt entirely with ourſelves and our own minds, to cultivate ſuch diſpoſitions there as may keep us ever attentive and zealous to labour for the general intereſt, and the good of

others

others whenever an occaſion ſhall preſent, and may prepare our internal part to become a fit member in the kingdom of the juſt.

Theſe diſpoſitions, wherein the theological and moral virtues conſiſt, are beſt improved by the practice of good works done in purſuance of their impulſes: for a man can never ſtrengthen his Charity or his public ſpirit, ſo much by theory and meditation, as by acts of kindneſs or real patriotiſm, where neither fame, nor intereſt nor private affection nor expectation of a return has any ſhare in the deed. But ſince we have not a call to ſuch good works, ſufficient to keep up our propenſity to do them, it would quickly languiſh and become extinct if expedients were not provided to ſupply it continually with fuel: therefore certain things indifferent in themſelves are enjoined, that we may have an opportunity of exerciſing our obedience in performing the injunction.

In theſe conſiſts Religion ſtrictly ſo called, when diſtinguiſhed from morality: and they are termed divine ſervices, not that we can ſuppoſe them of any ſervice to God, but becauſe being of no direct apparent ſervice either to ourſelves or our fellow-creatures, we perform them upon an opinion of their being pleaſing in his ſight: which gives them a ſimilar efficacy upon our minds with actual good works done upon the ſame motive of pleaſing him. Therefore are they conſequentially of important

ſervice, both to ourſelves and all whom we may have to deal with, as they nouriſh in us an habitual truſt and dependence upon the Almighty: which may enſure us tranquillity of mind in times of difficulty or danger, and beget in us a readineſs to that which alone he will eſteem a ſervice to himſelf, the doing good to his creatures, and joining in every general intereſt wherein he ſhall be pleaſed to afford us an opportunity of becoming, in any little degree, inſtrumental.

This then being their deſign, if we keep this in memory it will help to direct us in the uſe and application of them: for we are not to imagine ourſelves the better merely for having attended divine ſervices, ſermons, private prayer, pſalm-ſinging, reading, meditation, or the like; but for the effect worked by them upon our hearts, in the improvement of any good habitual ſentiment there. But that effect will correſpond exactly with our management in the exerciſe of them. If we go through it only to pleaſe the world or our ſuperiors, it will be of none avail at all: If we perform the outward actions perfunctorily upon a perſuaſion of their being duties, it is better than nothing; for every act of obedience, however ſlovenly paid, will help to fix the ſenſe of a ſuperior Power to whom ſome duty is owing: yet is it very little better than nothing, as it can beget only a ſervile dread of a rigorous maſter, whoſe

whoſe orders we muſt comply with that he may not be angry with us. And if we do our work by ſtarts or remiſſly, the effect will be proportionable to the temper wherein we receive it.

Wherefore it behoves us all along in our divine ſervices to endeavour caſting our minds into the poſture ſuitable to that ſpeculative or practical virtue, whether truſt, or hope, or humility, or, ſelf-denial, or prudence or charity, which they are reſpectively adapted to encourage: for their operation is not like a charm, by ſupernatural efficacy, but by mechanical influence of language, geſtures, and objects, upon the imagination; and if the Holy Spirit be aiding, it is not ſo much by giving additional force to the means of grace, as by co operating with the endeavours of the recipient. But ſome of our ſervices being conſiderably long, there are perſons who complain they cannot keep up the proper attention throughout; it may then be recommended to ſelect ſuch parts as are moſt profitable, or they can moſt heartily join in: however let them try what they can, and if they really do ſo, they will do enough. And perhaps the length was calculated for the benefit of ſuch perſons as can pick up ten minutes attention here and there out of an hour, who could not carry it on the whole ten minutes at one ſtretch: if this were the caſe, we muſt ſuppoſe every ge-

neration grows more giddy than the former; for additions have been made every now and then to our offices, but never any retrenchments.

3. But the manner of performing our religious exercises will depend in great measure upon the spirit or motive wherewith we enter upon them, which I conceive had better be that of hope and advantage, than fear or obligation. I am not ignorant that you cannot bring people of no religion into any without suggesting motives of terror and necessity; for Religion has nothing inviting to their palate by which you might allure them, nor any thing profitable in their estimation by which you might tempt them, because they have no idea of profit unless in the encrease of their possessions, or gratification of their desires and humours. So you must represent it as an indispensable duty, which they must acquit themselves of at their utmost peril: therefore I am not for discarding those engines, as being needful enough with persons and upon occasions, where wanted. But for such as have made any intimacy with Religion, and have tasted the sweets of a rational and regular conduct, a dispassionate, benign and holy temper of mind, I think they may find more noble inducements to carry them through the exercises that tend to encrease those blessings in them, than the dread

dread of miſchief, or thought of a taſk that muſt be finiſhed.

Nor do I pretend to deny there is an obligation to thoſe exerciſes, nor that grievous miſchief will enſue upon the omiſſion: but it is not unuſual in common life to do things we are obliged to, without any thought of the obligation, where we have other incitements ſtarting foremoſt to the Notice. He that paſſes through a turnpike, muſt pay the toll or his horſes will be ſeized; but if the road be very convenient for him, and made ſafe and ſmooth from miry and foundrous it was before, the toll comes from him in the nature of a voluntary contribution, nor does he once think of the ſeizure. He that ſhould behave rudely, indecently and offenſively in company, would run the hazard of being turned out of it and loſing his character: thoſe would be very diſagreeable events, yet who of us ever finds occaſion to carry them in contemplation? for uſe and the pleaſure and credit of civil deportment engage us to it effectually. In like manner, how obligatory ſoever the duties of Religion be, while we have a juſt ſenſe of the benefits accruing from them, this will turn the obligation into matter of choice and prudence, ſo that we ſhall eſcape the danger without thinking of it: we need only reſerve our apprehenſions as motives lying dormant in the box, ready to aſſiſt in the ſcale at ſeaſons when paſ-

ſion, pleaſure, or indolence preſs ſo hard upon us that our moral ſenſe becomes too feeble to actuate us alone.

But that Religion has been made ſo much a taſk and terror, I apprehend owing to the craft of former ages; for there is nothing like frighting men to make them governable, and to open an eaſy introduction for gainful ſuperſtitions. Our modern enthuſiaſts, though perhaps they have not ſo deep deſigns as their predeceſſors, employ the ſame engine to draw crouded mobs around them. They perſuade men that nobody can be ſaved who does not firſt believe himſelf actually in a ſtate of damnation: they have the words perdition, reprobation, hell flames and eternal torments, perpetually in their mouths: delight to deſcribe the terrors of the laſt judgment, when the rich and mighty of this world ſhall be haled about by devils, and mankind in general be overwhelmed in the unfathomable gulph, except a very few of their own followers: yet are theſe continually liable to be drawn aſide among the multitude, unleſs they neglect their lawful profeſſions to follow lectures and practiſe auſterities preſcribed them; ſo are always kept in the terror of a perſon walking along the icy brink of a precipice, every moment in danger of falling irrecoverably, if he chance to caſt off his eye upon any other object.

Theſe

Theſe topics of rhetoric might do good ſervice, judiciouſly applied, would but the profeſſors ſubmit to the government of more diſcerning heads than their own, who ſhould put into their hands only the voluptuous, the debauched, the giddy, the groſs-minded and the ſanguine, upon whom they might work more powerfully than any rational diſcourſes: but to the flegmatic, the ſerious, the weak-nerved and the timorous, with whom Hope is the virtue wherein they are already moſt deficient, but who I believe make up the groſs of their congregations, this regimen is arrant poiſon, fit only to drive the patient into deſperation or madneſs. In ſhort they too much reſemble Doctor Sangrado, who preſcribed bleeding and copious draughts of warm water for all diſtempers, the dropſy and the atrophy, as well as the fever, the ſurfeit and the plethora.

Nor are other more reaſonable teachers, eſpecially among the ſectaries, wholly exempt from the like indiſcretion, probably through lazineſs or incapacity to do better, becauſe fear is the eaſieſt paſſion for an orator to work upon: and being more fond of producing great effects upon their audience than careful to conſider whether thoſe effects be good or bad, they apply to the moſt ſenſible part of the human compoſition. By this management Religion becomes a melancholy burthenſome thing, which nobody would ſubmit to if it were

were not for the dreadful miſeries conſequent upon the neglect of it. The pious are affrighted, inſtead of being exhorted or perſuaded, into their devotions, which vitiates the performance of them; for a man can never do his work ſo well in a fright, as by a calm and determinate reſolution to do his beſt upon a perſuaſion of its being for his benefit.

Hence come the anxieties and ſuſpicions of having failed in due reverence and devotion, the ſighs and groans, the turned up eyes and mortified countenances of the godly, which beſides the hurt and diſquietude it brings upon them, does an injury to Religion itſelf by making it the averſion and laughing ſtock of the world; and I ſuppoſe gave occaſion to my Lord Shafteſbury to object, that ſo much care is taken of our future happineſs as to make us throw away all our preſent. For this were not true of genuine Religion, which though it may ſometimes, and that very rarely, require us to ſacrifice our private pleaſures and intereſts in its ſervice, yet is there no real act of ſound Religion that does not tend to the good order, the benefit and happineſs of mankind in this life. As God loveth a cheerful giver, ſo is he beſt pleaſed with a willing obedience, unforced by the terror of puniſhment or neceſſity of obligation: therefore we ſerve him moſt acceptably when perſuaded that thereby we ſerve ourſelves, for he wants nothing of us but that we

ſhould

ſhould embrace the means of improving our nature which he has vouchſafed us.

4. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom, but perfect love caſteth out fear: while the love remains imperfect, and at intervals wherein it cannot raiſe a glow of warmth enough to ſet our ſpirits in motion, we muſt ſupply the deficiency by fear; but whatever we can do by love will be much better done, than by any other ſpring. But the love of God, as explained before in the Chapter on Charity, is a different kind of ſentiment from that we ought to bear our neighbour: it is not the deſire of benefiting the party who is the object of it, for we cannot any where find fuel to feed ſuch a deſire; it is a filial dependence upon God as the author of all good, and a well-grounded perſuaſion that whatever we do with a rational idea of pleaſing him will prove moſt beneficial to ourſelves, or the common Intereſt of our fellow creatures. Yet there are great miſtakes in the exhortations to this love: for men are enjoined it as a duty, and threatened with what will happen to them if they fail in it. So fond are ſome folks of fear, that they would make it do every thing, and extract the flame of love out of this chilling principle: which ſeems an unnatural way of proceeding, not unlike the Virtuoſo's ſcheme, who would needs try to make a burning glaſs of ice.

But

But affection and perſuaſion do not lie under our command to raiſe them in what degree, or turn them upon what objects we pleaſe, by meer dint of reſolution: ſo the duty can extend no further than to the diligent application of the means naturally efficacious to produce them. We cannot poſſibly fright ourſelves into love, nor into the belief of a thing whereof we do not diſcern the evidence: all that fear can do in this caſe is to ſtifle our conſciouſneſs of wanting the affection and the belief, that the ſhame of it may not ſtare us in the face, which can only tend to teach us an hypocriſy ſo covert as to deceive our very ſelves, and thereby prevent our uſing the proper remedies for curing the ſore, becauſe not perceiving that we have one. Love can no otherwiſe be acquired than by a ſenſe of amiableneſs in the object, and that ſenſe muſt ſpring from a diſcernment of its tendency to ſomething we deſired before. Therefore the only way to make it ſincere and hearty is by obſervation of the benefits accruing to us from Religion, in improving the ſerenity of our mind and regularity of our conduct.

By praying to God we encreaſe our truſt and dependence on him, as a ſure protection in all ſituations: By praiſing him we recall many bleſſings to our thoughts we ſhould otherwiſe have overlooked or forgotten, and thereby become better ſatisfied with our condition: By confeſſion, we grow acquainted with our defects,

fects, and which way to apply our cares for curing them: By profeſſion of Faith we inculcate the convictions of our underſtanding upon our imagination, making them habitual and practical perſuaſions: By interceſſion we extend our Charity to all around us, not excepting the worthleſs and the wicked: By expreſſions of forgiveneſs we quench the ſparks of revenge, envy, anger, animoſity, and all unruly paſſions that would make havoc in our breaſts: By acknowledgement of the divine Wiſdom in bringing forth good out of both good and evil, we find encouragement to the exerciſe of our little powers, and learn patience under misfortunes, croſs accidents and injuries that fall upon us: By pious reſolutions we gather ſtrength to give our judgment the maſtery over ſudden humour and fond inclination: By compliance with ceremonies we inure ourſelves to diſcipline, and render our inferior faculties more tractable by the prudential rules of our own reaſon. To go through every particular would be endleſs: but we may ſay in ſhort there is no religious exerciſe rightly performed, which does not help to improve the growth of ſome ſalutary virtue, and no virtue which may not receive nouriſhment from ſome religious exerciſe.

I do not doubt there are many perſons who have experienced, that on coming out from their devotions, they feel themſelves in a manner

ner new creatures; they ſeem above the world and all its allurements; they have no ſenſual deſires, nor vanity, nor ſelfiſhneſs, nor reſentment, nor ill will to any body; no bias to indulgence or indolence, no repining at their condition, fretfulneſs at accidents befallen them, nor uneaſy dread of dangers whereto human nature is liable: but are inſpired with the ſtoical love of rectitude for its own ſake, and could almoſt do and ſuffer any thing for the glory they have had in contemplation before them. And though they find thoſe impreſſions quickly obſcured by the common buſineſs of life as ſoon as they begin to engage in it again, yet will they gather ſome additional ſtrength upon every renewal, until at length they come to have an influence upon the general tenour of mind and practice, moulding them into the frame wherein ſolid happineſs and uſefulneſs of character conſiſt. The knowledge of theſe deſirable effects will make them feel a ſenſible joy on having ſucceeded in performing their religious duties well, and give them vexation whenever conſcious of not having improved their opportunities as they might: which of courſe muſt excite an earneſt deſire to manage better another time, as matter of the higheſt expedience, and would urge them to their duty although there were no threatnings annexed to the neglect of it, nor obligation to render it indiſpenſable.

5. Yet

5. Yet when raiſed above fear by having gotten another principle, enabling us to do our work better without it, there is ſtill a danger to be guarded againſt, and that is from vanity. There are ſome people who do not ſo much deſire to be good, as to be better than others; as if Religion was only a ſecondary aim, to raiſe our credit with the world or in our own eſtimation. But this motive will vitiate our performances more than that of the fear we have diſcarded; for there are few things more oppoſite to the ſpirit of Religion than vanity, as being incompatible with charity, and a hearty zeal for any general intereſt. The vain man has always a ſeparate intereſt of his own, which is promoted by the ill ſucceſs of his neighbour, and whoever comes upon a line with him ſtands in his way: therefore he is perpetually tempted to cenſure, miſconſtrue and depreciate, nor can ever heartily endeavour to improve a virtue in another perſon, unleſs in order to boaſt of his own performance, and triumph over him thereupon; neither will he be ſecure againſt the temptation of making a merit of his piety, ſecretly in his own imagination even with God himſelf.

But it is very unſafe to be fond of drawing compariſons with others upon any ſubjects, eſpecially thoſe relating to religious and moral virtues: or ſcrutinizing into their actions, unleſs for our own inſtruction by obſerving their

ſucceſſes

ſucceſſes and miſcarriages impartially together with the cauſes of them. The beſt way will be to conſider Religion as a beneficial thing, and ſtudy diligently how to make our own advantages of it; never troubling our heads with what other people do, unleſs as occaſion offers to aſſiſt them. For we need not be afraid of retarding ourſelves by helping another forward: Heaven is big enough to hold us all, nor ſhall we find a whit the more difficulty in getting in for ſeeing thouſands beſides travel with greater ſpeed: on the contrary, ſince the general intereſt of the ſpecies, in the perfecting human nature, is to be compleated by the joint labours of multitudes, the more we ſee ſetting their hands to the work, and the greater proficiency they make, the better reaſon we have to rejoice.

And the cuſtom of regarding religious exerciſes as matter of prudence and advantage, will aſſiſt us in adjuſting the meaſure, as well as the manner of them. Not that I would perſuade any body to rely ſolely upon his own judgment in this point, but have a due regard to authority, eſtabliſhed uſage, example and recommendation of perſons of a judicious piety: but it ſhould be remembered there are extremes on both ſides: a man may be righteous over much, as righteouſneſs is underſtood of aſſiduities in externals, as well as too little; the learned and pious ſometimes have their whims

and extravagancies, as well as the beau and the giddy girl; and the circumſtances of ſituation and temperament will make that inexpedient at one ſeaſon, which was profitable at another. Every man has ſome judgment of his own if he will take care to exert it, and though it does not become him to refuſe any helps at hand to aſſiſt it, yet neither ought he to forbear making the beſt uſe of it he can. Therefore it is very dangerous to pin an implicit faith upon ſome particular doctor or writer, becauſe whimſies happen to ſtrike our fancy by tallying with our own: we are not to cry, I am of Paul, nor I of Apollos, but I am of Chriſt; that is, of that head whom we follow beſt and ſerve beſt, by doing any little real ſervice to his body, or any the ſmalleſt member of it; not forgetting our own ſpiritual part, which is one of his members.

It behoves us to try all things and hold faſt by the beſt, but if we do not try calmly and carefully, we ſhall run a hazard of holding faſt by the worſt. Whence it appears highly expedient to exerciſe what judgment we have, both upon perſons and things, obſerving from time to time what effect our religious exerciſes produce upon our minds and our manners: for they have no intrinſic value, but it is their tendency alone to work a good effect that makes them duties pleaſing to God; we may be a little aukward in making our obſervations at firſt,

but practice will bring us gradually to be more expert. If then we find they leave none or a very tranſient impreſſion behind, if they call us off from the active duties of our ſtation, from our attention to the ſervices we may do one another; if they make us melancholy, deſponding, fretful, moroſe, contemptuous, vain, cenſorious or inequitable; if they nouriſh our indolence under a notion of ſuperſeding the practical duties by atoning for the omiſſion of them; if they make us too important in our own eſtimation, urging us to vie with the Apoſtles and primitive Martyrs, and undertake exploits far above our talents; we may conclude aſſuredly, that we have been faulty, either in the choice of them, or in the manner or the meaſure of performing them.

For ſome of thoſe inconveniencies abovementioned will enſue from the exceſs of devotion, when carried on ſo long until it becomes a dead form, without any alacrity of mind to give it life: for even our mental functions depend upon the organs of our machinery which can continue their play only for a certain time, and if we go on to force them beyond their ſtrength, they will throw in uneaſy ſenſations, quickly corrupting to all the gloomy and ſour humours. It is true, the commerce of the world is apt to render them ſtiff, ſo that ſome force and exertion is neceſſary to make them do what they can; but it is our buſineſs to find out

out by experience and obſervation, what they are capable of performing with ſpirit, beyond which we can expect no ſervice from them either agreeable to God or profitable to ourſelves.

6. But there is one ſet of religious exerciſes, thoſe I mean relating to humiliation, the uſe of which ſeems very little underſtood, and therefore deſerves a particular conſideration. I believe it is now pretty much out of faſhion, becauſe the generality of mankind are too fond of indulgence and thinking highly of themſelves, ever to caſt their eyes willingly upon an object that may tend to mortify them: but for that very reaſon it might prove the more ſerviceable, if they could be prevailed upon once in a while to do it. Thoſe who practiſe this exerciſe perhaps are the leaſt ſuſceptible of benefit therefrom, conſidering the idea wherein they enter upon it, being perſons of cold and timorous conſtitutions, who eſteem it their duty to afflict and think the worſt of themſelves poſſible; whereby they only encreaſe the defect in their natural temperament, and perſuade themſelves that the very act of humiliation without reference to conſequences is an acceptable ſacrifice. But it is an unworthy notion of the giver of all bleſſings, to imagine him delighted with the affliction of his creatures, unleſs when it tends to their greater benefit: it is then worth while to enquire what

are the benefits of humiliation, and whether the ſame may not be obtained without making it a melancholy and afflicting work.

A man living in ſome of the back ſettlements in America, on hearing there is a party of enemy Indians coming that way, will I ſuppoſe examine carefully into the ſtate and condition of his houſe particularly the weak parts of it, inſpecting the doors and windows and ſearching for any looſened pannel in the walls where they might poſſibly break in: he will look over all his arms and ammunition, to ſee what he has in ſtore, and whether there be any ruſt or damp or defect among them: and all this he will do without taking pains to afflict himſelf at what he finds amiſs, but in order to provide for his neceſſary defence upon having a thorough knowledge of his wants and his weakneſſes.

He that has an infirm conſtitution will do wiſely to make himſelf well acquainted with his particular infirmities, to obſerve what kind and quantity of diet, what accidents, employments and exerciſes have diſagreed with him; that he may not think too highly of his ſtoutneſs ſo as to brave weathers, undertake fatigues, or indulge in entertainments that would hurt him. If he vex and fret at being no ſtouter, it will do him no good either in his health or in the eye of Heaven: nor can the knowledge of his infirmities profit him otherwiſe

wiſe than by exciting his vigilance to uſe every caution againſt whatever might encreaſe them, and purſue every regimen and management that may help to amend them. In like manner it is highly expedient for us, who are all of very crazy conſtitutions in the eternal part, and have dangers and enemies perpetually ſurrounding us without doors, to take ourſelves into cloſe examination, particularly on the worſt ſide of our characters: but we ought to do it impartially, not thinking to merit by making matters worſe than they are: for we have groſs failings enow to contemplate, and if we dwell too ſtrongly upon the trivial, it is a ſhrewd preſumption we have overlooked the more flagrant.

Nor is there any Religion in trying to afflict ourſelves at the diſcovery: our groanings make no ſweet melody among the heavenly choirs, neither can they anſwer any good end to ourſelves unleſs we be of ſo lumpiſh a compoſition as never to ſtir without the dread of ſmart, and have no deſire for any thing beneficial, nor laudable ambition to riſe a little ſtep higher in the ſcale of virtue. Some diſpleaſure will naturally ariſe upon the view of our diſorders the firſt time we turn our reflection that way, but he that has been uſed to the exerciſe knows beforehand what he is to expect; ſo his imperfection is nothing new to him that he ſhould be mortified at the diſcovery: the par-

ticular examination of it is rather a cheerful work, becauſe giving him hopes that he ſhall gather information from thence how to proceed in the rectifying it; it is like the ſearch made by a mariner, who knows his ſhip is leaky, and thinks it the luckieſt thing in the world if he can find out all the leaks, becauſe till then he has no chance of ſtopping them. Therefore he will ſearch induſtriouſly into all his corruptions and all his weakneſſes, what irregular deſires he has, what unruly paſſions and inveterate habits, in what particular virtues he falls moſt deficient, wherein he has done amiſs, or not ſo well as he might upon the occaſion, what temptations have been moſt apt to prevail upon him, and what were the real motives of actions for which he has been moſt forward to applaud himſelf.

Theſe enquiries will teach him not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, nor be too ſecure againſt attacks, nor yet above improvement; yet neither need they make him deſpond, as knowing that forewarned is forearmed, and that the ſenſe of his imperfections will bring him within the verge of that protection which will raiſe him ſo far above them as is needful in this vale of mortality: they will convince him that he is not a compleatly rational creature, nor entire maſter of his own thoughts and actions, therefore muſt uſe management with himſelf and proceed with

with caution, taking the benefit of whatever helps are afforded him; and will give him a candour, a compaſſion and fellow feeling towards imperfections he ſees in other perſons. Some ſuch examination, I apprehend, would be particularly ſalutary to the Freethinker, as it might abate his ſuper-abundant ſelf-ſufficiency, and his high opinion of human reaſon, which is his grand infirmity introducing a thouſand others: for he runs into errors and abſurdities by thinking too highly of himſelf, and he thinks too highly of himſelf for want of knowing himſelf.

But our blemiſhes and foibles are a very unwelcome proſpect, which the eye does not willingly fix upon but is apt to ſkim lightly over, unleſs there be ſome additional weight beſides expedience hung upon the attention to keep it ſteady to the work. Therefore it is commonly recommended to make this exerciſe a matter of devotion, and rank it among the divine ſervices: becauſe by placing ourſelves more immediately in the preſence of God, and drawing out the liſt of our corruptions as it were for his inſpection, we ſhall be likely to do it more compleatly. For we dare not prevaricate with the ſearcher of hearts, and the awe of the divine Majeſty before whom we ſtand, will make us more earneſt, more honeſt and impartial in the ſcrutiny: whereby we may diſcover lurking corruptions, ſecret propenſities

and many unjuſtifiable motives, having given the real ſpring to our moſt ſpecious performances, which would have eſcaped us in the ordinary way of meditation without the check of that bridle upon our imagination.

7. Very great ſtreſs has been laid upon the duty of faſting, which being a medicine in the ſpiritual diſpenſary, the qualities and uſes of it deſerve to be well conſidered before it be preſcribed. Now I conceive it operates as a damper of the ſpirits, and weakner of that attachment we have to the common enjoyments and engagements of life: therefore ought to be adminiſtred to ſuch patients with whom that intention is requiſite to be purſued, and in no greater meaſure than ſuffices to anſwer it.

But there are various degrees of faſting: the abſtinence from all food, or from fleſh meats for whole days together, was ſtrongly enjoined in former times, perhaps not ſo much for the ſake of Religion, as to force men by the inconveniences of it to purchaſe a diſpenſation with their money: ſo that he was the beſt ſon of the Church, not who ſtarved himſelf moſt, but who gave moſt largely to be excuſed from the obligation to ſtarve. Such abſtinence might be very adviſeable for your turtle eaters, city faſt hunters, and perſons who live in a continual round of pleaſures; but for old women and others who have frequent occaſion to converſe with their apothecaries, I hold it ſtark naught:

naught: for they have more need of ſomething to raiſe their ſpirits than to depreſs them, and their ſcruples, deſpondencies and murmurings, proceed in great meaſure from poorneſs of blood or ſtagnation of the circulating juices, occaſioned by the feeble tone of their veſſels, want of exerciſe, or of ſeaſonable recreation; and if they could apply with more glee to their common employments, they might return from them with better alacrity to their devotions.

For my own part; who am of a rather melancholy temperament and cold digeſtion, I could never reap any benefit from faſting, tho' I have tried it formerly, but found it enfeeble my underſtanding, and make me leſs fit for religious exerciſes: and had I continued it till this time, I believe my Chapters would have diſſolved into a water-gruel ſtile, and been ſtill more deficient than they are in a rational cheerful ſtrain of piety.

Nevertheleſs moderation and temperance can do hurt to no man; he may keep a continual faſt in this ſenſe with good profit, and if he riſe up now and then with a half meal, he may find himſelf lighter and more alert for any ſerious application, at leaſt it will inure his appetites to diſcipline, and help to give him the command over them; which is the more needful becauſe civility and cuſtom often laying temptations to exceſs in the way, it would be doubly

doubly dangerous to have a domeſtic enemy importuning him. As to higher degrees of abſtinence, I ſhall not pretend to decide upon them: ſince they are ſtrongly recommended, it becomes every man to make the trial; once or twice cannot ſpoil his conſtitution, and then he may conſult experience, than whom he cannot have a phyſician of better authority, for the continuing or leaving them off.

But in whatever meaſure or manner he practiſes them, it will be expedient he ſhould think them not ſo much duties in themſelves, as means aſſiſting him to perform his other duties the better: for if he regards them as actual ſervices, he may be apt to imagine that after having gone through ſo laborious a taſk, he may be allowed a little relaxation from attending to his conduct. This muſt needs throw him off his guard when entering into the common tranſactions of life, and then his paſſions and deſires having been kept ſuſpended for awhile, would return upon him with freſh vigour: which might make his caſe too much reſemble that of the man out of whom a devil had been caſt, and he returned to his houſe and found it ſwept and garniſhed, and then took unto him ſeven other devils more wicked than the former, ſo that his laſt ſtate was worſe than the firſt.

8. As there are few of our religious exerciſes which have not a conſiderable mixture of prayer,

prayer, it will be worth while to examine into the nature of that ſpecies of devotion. Prayer is one of the principal means of grace, and therein lies its whole efficacy. I have endeavoured in the Chapter under that title to explain the idea of Grace conſidered as an effect worked upon us, which was a diſpoſition of mind to ſome ſentimental or practical virtue, with more than common vigour and alertneſs: and though we are taught that this cannot be effected without aid of the holy Spirit, yet he never produces it of himſelf, but only cooperates with our endeavours to ſupply their want of ſtrength; therefore ſome natural means muſt always be put in uſe to obtain an effuſion of grace.

Now prayer is a ſerious meditation and expreſſion of our deſires in the ſight of God, and as it were in converſation with him: we are indeed never really out of his ſight during any one moment of our lives, though upon common occaſions we think nothing of it, nor is it always convenient that we ſhould, therefore can receive no effect therefrom upon ourſelves: but when imagining ourſelves actually before him, the ſolemnity of his immediate preſence will give an acuteneſs to our meditations and a ſincerity to our deſires, which will make us judge more impartially and ſoundly than we could otherwiſe have done, and deſire things heartily to which at other times we had a ſecret re-

reluctance. And ſince habits are learned by repeated ſingle acts, an aſſiduity in prayer has a natural tendency to beget virtues in us that could not have been acquired by reaſon and inſtruction: in which way alone I apprehend it is that we receive an anſwer to our prayers.

It is written, Aſk and ye ſhall receive, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you: but no expoſitor ever underſtood thereby that we ſhall receive indiſcriminately whatever we pleaſe to aſk for. The wiſeſt among us may ſometimes aſk for things that would be miſchievous to them if granted: and though they ſhould confine their requeſts to increaſe of grace and virtue, from which there is no hazard of miſchief to them, yet the granting it may be improper, as fruſtrating thoſe grand deſigns of Providence, which we have ſeen in ſome preceding Chapters, are worked out by frailties and imperfections among the creatures. Therefore we are taught to underſtand by the promiſe, that God will give the devout worſhipper what he knows in his Wiſdom will be good for him, whether contained in the petition or not, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the good of other creatures with whom he ſtands connected.

But we cannot believe otherwiſe than that God, who is the Author of all powers, the fountain of all good things, will of his own free Bounty give unto his creatures all the good

that is proper for them, and has already provided meaſures in his courſes of nature and fortune, requiſite to produce it: therefore prayer does not operate upon him, but upon ourſelves. For there is no room to expect that our importunities ſhould prevail upon him to depart a tittle from the determinations he has made in perfect Wiſdom, which comprize every thing, that is to befal us: we are not to look for miraculous interpoſitions among the motions of matter on our behalf, neither does the office of the holy Spirit lie in turning the courſe of events, nor cauſing alterations in external bodies, but ſolely in working upon the minds of men.

But it has pleaſed God to make the right exerciſe of our Freewill one among the cauſes procuring the good that ſhall befal us, and to render the good he gives us effectual or not, according to the diſpoſition and temper wherewith we receive it: therefore prayer, having a natural efficacy to mend the ſtate and diſpoſition of the heart, will enable us to reap the benefit of thoſe good things he has procured for us and put into our power. So it is truly ſaid, Aſk and ye ſhall receive, though we cannot move God to do any ſingle thing he would not have done without our prayer, becauſe we may move ourſelves thereby till we come within the ſtream of his bleſſings.

Hence

Hence it follows, and divines conſtantly recommend, that we ſhould pray with reſignation, for though we ought never to preſer a petition which we do not believe in our ſincere judgment beneficial and proper for us to attain, yet we may be miſtaken, in which caſe God will not give us the thing we deſire, but a better in lieu: nor will he alter his meaſures upon our requeſt, but give that which he has already made our devotion a natural means to obtain. So that if we aſk with devotion we may be ſure of receiving, not perhaps the very thing we have ſet our hearts upon, but ſome improvement in our ſpiritual part, more valuable and more conducive to our preſent ſolace of mind and to our future intereſts.

Hence appears likewiſe that the benefit of prayer depends intirely upon the manner of performing it, for if we do not pray with faith we might full as well have let it alone: but by Faith we are not to underſtand a confident aſſurance of prevailing in the particular point we pray for, for this has no foundation to reſt upon either in reaſon or Scripture. If any one deſires to know the proper idea of Faith, it is beyond my ſkill to explain it better to him than I have already done in the Chapter upon that article, where he will find it the being poſſeſſed of a juſt ſenſe of the divine Attributes, and of the government throughout the Univerſe being adminiſtred in perfect Wiſdom

dom and Goodneſs, ſo as to order all things for the beſt. While this ſenſe can be kept up lively and vigorous in the imagination, we may be ſure of reaping good benefit by our prayers; whenever it evaporates, they will become empty form of none avail. Therefore it was that in §. 2. I propoſed to ſuch as cannot keep their attention throughout a ſervice, to ſelect ſome particular parts, for one tenth performed with Spirit is worth a million of meer words and formal genuflexions: but then the omiſſion of the reſt muſt be really owing to inability and human infirmity, not to lazineſs; for nine parts in ten will not ſuffice, if it were feaſible to have gone through the whole.

9. From what has been ſaid it appears, that increaſe of grace and virtue are the proper and primary objects of prayer, becauſe having a natural tendency to procure them, but not to procure any thing elſe: for prayer, as obſerved before, being a pouring out our ſentiments and deſires before God, the awe of his preſence upon our imagination, will give them a purity and ſincerity they had not during our commerce in the world, and by putting our minds frequently into that poſture of deſire and ſentiment, we ſhall bring them by degrees to fall habitually thereinto of their own accord; juſt as a man may bring his feet to turn outwards ſpontaneouſly by often holding them in that poſition.

Never-

Nevertheleſs prayer may very uſefully be preferred for externals; for though it has no influence to procure them, it may ſometimes procure what will procure them. By praying for health, for ſucceſs in our callings, and for deliverance from evils, we ſhall impreſs upon our minds a ſenſe of thoſe bleſſings coming from God, who will be propitious according as we conduct ourſelves before him: and this will engage us to an induſtry, a ſobriety, a vigilance and prudence, that may not improbably bring us into poſſeſſion, of the things we deſire: ſo that health, ſucceſs, and deliverance will be the real effects of our prayer. If we pray for the peace, the good order, and the proſperity of our country, we ſhall become more ſedulous and hearty in doing our parts towards promoting them, and help to inſpire the like ſentiments among our neighbours: whereby, it is not impoſſible that our country may really be the better for our praying.

In like manner whatever we pray for with a reflection obvious to the very heathens, that God will grant nothing to the prayers of the idle and the negligent, we ſhall obtain ſo much as our own right diſpoſition of mind can contribute towards attaining it, and this is much more conducive to the procurement of good things without us, than people are commonly aware of: for if the wants, vexations and troubles we bring upon ourſelves by our own miſ-

miſconduct were ſubtracted, I believe few of us would find cauſe to complain at what remained. Yet our prayers are not certainly loſt although the diligence and management they nouriſh in us ſhould prove of none avail towards ſupplying our wants, becauſe they may furniſh us with what will anſwer our purpoſe as well without.

Suppoſe a man having none other ſubſiſtence than ten acres of land which are worth him five pounds a year, and of ſo infirm a body that he cannot poſſibly earn a farthing more by his ſkill or labour; if upon finding himſelf in want of neceſſaries he ſhould pray to have his land increaſed, but inſtead of that it ſhould pleaſe God miraculouſly ſo to fertilize his land, that it ſhould yield him a hundred pounds a year, every body would allow this to be a full anſwer to his petition: for however he might expreſs himſelf, it was not the quantity of land, but the income ariſing from it that he deſired. In like manner when we aſk for externals, it is not the bare having them in cuſtody, but the eaſe and pleaſure to be received from them, that is properly the object of our deſire; and we aſk the things for ſake of the enjoyment we expect they will give us in the poſſeſſion: therefore if God refuſe us them, but ſo fructify the ſoil of our hearts, as that it ſhall yield the ſame income of enjoyment we could have expected from the addi-

tion of them, it is a compleat anſwer to our petition. For it has been ſhown, in a Chapter of the firſt volume upon the Ultimate Good, that it lies ſolely in ſatisfaction or complacence of mind; all other things are good or valuable only in proportion as they tend nearly or remotely to yield us an income of that.

Now prayer devoutly performed with due reſignation to the Will and Wiſdom of God, and a perſuaſion that he orders all things for the beſt, will make us better pleaſed with the bleſſings he vouchſafes us, better contented under his diſpenſations, and more hopeful to draw ſome good profit from them: whereby we may receive greater ſatisfaction and complacence of mind, and paſs our days more happily, than we might have done had the petition been granted in the form it was offered. Therefore I can ſo far allow confidence of obtaining a favourable anſwer to our requeſt, as an ingredient in the faith rendering it effectual: for the devout worſhipper may be aſſuredly confident of receiving the thing he aſks in value, though perhaps not in ſpecie.

Not that I would give into the Stoical extravagance of expecting to do every thing by the temper and diſpoſition of the mind, ſo as that this ſhould always keep us eaſy and happy under the ſevereſt preſſure of wants, diſtreſſes and pains: for God has not made ſuch firmneſs practicable in this imperfect ſtate of mortality.

tality. He has given us wants and natural appetites with various means of gratification, wherein he has placed a conſiderable part of our enjoyment in this life, and has made our deſires the avenues leading into prudence, induſtry, ſociableneſs, and many other virtues; there is nothing then, blameable in purſuing our conveniences and accommodations by all lawful and innocent methods; but the principal fund of our happineſs muſt ſpring from the ſtate and tenour of our minds; this then we ought to improve with all poſſible diligence, for it will make us reliſh our pleaſures while we have them, and prove a ſure refuge in diſappointment when all other things fail. Nor need we ſcruple to make externals the ſubject of our petitions, for if offered in ſincerity and pureneſs of heart, we have ground to hope aſſuredly that God will either give us the good things ſeeming requiſite to our well being, or if he judges otherwiſe, will enable us to enjoy our minds with peace and tranquillity without them, or at leaſt make our preſſure the paſſage to ſome greater advantage.

10. Upon the ſame grounds is founded the duty of praying for others, for their deliverance from wants and diſtreſſes, for their patience under them, their drawing ſome good profit from them, for their health, their improvement, their ſucceſs in lawful undertakings, for the peace and proſperity of our country, for

the advancement of ſound Religion and practical Philoſophy, thoſe haſteners of the coming of that grand bleſſing to the human ſpecies, the kingdom of the juſt, which is the kingdom of God, wherein his Will ſhall be done on earth as it is in heaven. For though we cannot move God, nor retard or haſten or make the leaſt alteration in his meaſures, nor influence the hearts of other perſons by our devotions, yet we may move and work alterations in ourſelves thereby. And the tenour of our minds may be of greater ſervice to other people than moſt of us are careful enough to obſerve, for from the deſires of the heart the actions proceed; according as that ſtands more humanely, benevolently and piouſly diſpoſed, we ſhall apply with better inclination to aſſiſt all we can, as well in their diſtreſſes, as their ſucceſſes: and when it is remembered how great a force there is in ſympathy, we ſhall ſee that they may catch a ſpark of induſtry, of prudence and patience from us to their own emolument; at leaſt they will receive a conſiderable comfort and pleaſure on finding us take a ſincere part in either fortune befalling them.

Neither are our good wiſhes unavailing to the community, as they prompt us to contribute our ſhare towards promoting the proſperity we wiſh for. We are all members of the community, whoſe good is advanced by the united efforts of its conſtituents; nor is the moſt

moſt inconſiderable among us of no conſequence, if it be no more than to abſtain from doing miſchief by his private paſſions and indiſcretion. If the politic, the aſpiring, the hot-headed, the diſcontented and the wanton, had not too ſovereign a contempt of prayer ever to join in it devoutly or otherwiſe than for form and faſhion ſake, I think there could not be ſuch unwillingneſs to part with power nor greedineſs to get into it, ſuch ſtruggles and party-animoſities, ſuch virulence and obloquy in declamatory proſe, or ſcandalous verſification as we are now a days peſtered with: however I cannot but congratulate my country for that I believe thoſe evils have never run ſhorter lengths in any age or nation, than our own.

Then for that grand intereſt of the ſpecies, the progreſs of perfection in human nature and bringing forward the kingdom of the juſt, the ſeat of this I apprehend lies not in external nature but in the hearts of men; and it has been ſhown in the Chapter on Divine Oeconomy, how Providence carries on this great work by a multitude of operators concurring in their ſeveral ſtations thereto: but we cannot better qualify ourſelves for performing our part than by an increaſe of our Charity, which our prayers are particularly efficacious to ſtrengthen in us, ſo that we may be ſure thereby of advancing one perſon ſomewhat nearer towards perfection, and have a chance of advancing

many more by our example and ſympathy. For while praying for the good of others or the advancement of true Religion, we cannot in reverence to the divine Majeſty then fully ſtriking upon our imagination, but heartily wiſh and deſire what we pray for, which will gradually bring the like heartineſs to be habitual and practical: and it has been obſerved in former places, that if a hearty and judicious Charity were once become univerſal among mankind, that alone would ſuffice to reſtore a Paradiſe upon Earth.

Hence may be ſeen the foundation there is in reaſon and nature of that injunction to pray for our enemies, and thoſe that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us, becauſe by ſo doing we ſhall preſerve our univerſal Charity unimpaired, our oppoſition will not be enmity, nor rancour, nor reſentment, but unwelcome neceſſity, nor proceed further than prudence and ſelf defence require: we ſhall continue ready to do them all the good offices conſiſtent with our own juſt rights, and the rights of others to whom they may be dangerous: we ſhall not reſent private injuries whenever greater inconveniencies and diſorders would enſue therefrom to the public: and ſhould be able, if our conſiderate judgment ſhould ſo pronounce expedient, to turn the right cheek to him that has ſmitten the left, and give up our coat alſo to one that has taken away our cloak.

11. I am apt vehemently to ſuſpect that the prayers of our Church frequently concluding Through or for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, gives an idea to many perſons that God has no immediate regard for us at all, but beſtows his bleſſings purely to gratify his Son, upon thoſe to whom he has happily taken a liking: and that by the uſe of that name we may move him to do a thing he was indifferent to before. I need not take pains to ſhow how repugnant this notion is to reaſon and rational Faith: neither do I believe it was in the thoughts of the compilers of our Liturgy, nor deſigned to be inculcated in the Scriptures. I own indeed there are ſeveral expreſſions which ſeem to look ſtrongly that way, and perhaps it might be neceſſary that ſuch opinion ſhould be connived at for the Jews, who looked for a temporal deliverer to reſcue them by his might and proweſs, or for the groſs-minded Gentiles, who could take their apprehenſions of the Almighty only from the likeneſs of earthly princes, in order to lead them by the avenue of their own conceptions into an expectation of benefit from the Goſpel.

But for ſuch as have ears to hear, they are told expreſſly, that God ſo loved the world he gave his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins: ſo the Redemption was a joint act of love in the Father, as well as in the Son. And he is all along repreſented as the God of love, ſend-

ing his ſunſhine and his rain upon the juſt and the unjuſt, long-ſuffering and merciful, ready to forgive, unwilling the ſinner ſhould periſh, but that he ſhould turn from his evil ways and live. This being his character there is no doubt, he is always ready to give his creatures all the good things proper for them, and conſiſtent with the order of government reſpecting his ſpiritual Natures eſtabliſhed in perfect Wiſdom, of his own meer motion, without needing an interceſſion prompting him thereto. Beſides that, however we may underſtand the diſtinction of perſons in the Godhead, they can never be imagined ſo different in temper and character, as that one ſhould take a liking to objects indifferent to the other, or one ſhould importune for things not already judged proper by the perfect Wiſdom of the other.

But the Goſpel teaches that Chriſt is the way and the life, for no man can come to the Father unleſs through the Son: he came from God to direct us by his doctrines and aſſiſt us by his inſtitutions, and goes before to lead us by his example in the road which is the natural avenue to the divine bleſſings: therefore he is ſtiled the Interceſſor, Mediator, and Agent going between God and Man, as I have endeavoured already to explain in §. 26. of the Chapter on the Chriſtian Scheme. But then we muſt travel the road ourſelves or ſhall receive no benefit from the Interceſſion, which operates

operates no otherwiſe than by bringing us into the way: for even his death and paſſion will avail only ſuch, who ſtrive to imitate his endurance in a good cauſe, to crucify the luſts of their fleſh, the pride and indolence and unruly paſſions of their heart, and to ſubdue the carnal or ſenſual part under ſubjection to the ſpiritual or rational.

Therefore I apprehend we are not warranted to expect that Chriſt will do any thing for us at a diſtance in Heaven, nor otherwiſe than by the inſtrumentality of our own powers towards bringing our hearts into that frame which may quality them for reception of thoſe bleſſings, that God in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs has prepared for his creatures. And by the phraſe, Through Jeſus Chriſt, is to be underſtood that we hope to obtain the things we ſue for by the way he has opened to us for arriving at them: and for his ſake, implies that God will give them to us in conſideration of our employing the means he has put into our hands for attaining them. So that thoſe expreſſions are of ſimilar import with that ending one of the ſentences in the Lord's prayer, Forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us: or ſomething in the nature of an oath, as if we ſhould ſay, So help me God in my preſent wants as I ſhall ſtrive faithfully to perſevere in the tenour of ſentiment and conduct

duct preſcribed me, and avail myſelf of the aids afforded me in the Goſpel.

I do not mean to condemn the literal ſenſe of Interceſſion in perſons who cannot underſtand any other, for there are many among our vulgar of as groſs conceptions as the ancient Jew or the Gentile; and as there is meat for men and milk for babes, we muſt allow every one to take what is moſt ſuitable to his digeſtion: therefore I would not wiſh any body to diſturb himſelf that he cannot fully enter into the explanation offered above, for whoever applies to his devotions with the pureſt ideas he is capable of entertaining, performs them well, and will receive all the benefits from them promiſed in the Scriptures. But I think the literal ſenſe ought not to be countenanced, much leſs encouraged, in whomſoever is ſuſceptible of the other: becauſe experience teſtifies into what miſchiefs it has unwarily led mankind. For if God had no bowels of compaſſion for us ſince the diſobedience of Adam, yet might be moved to give us eternal happineſs by the Interceſſion of his Son: the Son too, after we had forfeited his favour by actual tranſgreſſions, might re-inſtate us upon the recommendation of Saint Peter, or Saint Mary, or Saint Bennet Sheerhog, or Saint Vedaſt alias Foſter, or ſome other prime favourite: but if we happen to be ſtrangers to the foreſaid Saints, ſtill it is likely they in imitation of their Maſter's example,

will take us under protection, if we can get ſome prieſt or holy man upon earth to preſent our petition. Thus have men been led to imagine that in the Court of Heaven, as in ſome Italian Court, points are carried by intereſt and favour: and thus Religion has been turned into an infamous trade.

12. But though we have now in theſe Countries gotten rid of thoſe corrupt excreſcencies, yet there are others which ſometimes creep out from the vulgar idea of Chriſt doing any thing for us while we lie ſtill, or otherwiſe than by enabling us to do what we could not have done of ourſelves: for dependence on him and the practice of good works being promiſcuouſly inculcated as the neceſſary ſteps to ſalvation, many are apt to place them out of their proper order, reckoning that the firſt which ought to be eſteemed the laſt. They apprehend good works no otherwiſe beneficial than by giving them a claim to the protection of Chriſt, by whoſe ſole operation the Mercy of God is turned upon them. He has commanded righteouſneſs and declared he will love thoſe who ſeek it, ſo they muſt be righteous only to pleaſe him and gain the effects of his love: whence they value themſelves upon their orthodoxy, and place ſalvation in externals, thinking themſelves good Chriſtians in proportion to the ſtaunchneſs of their belief, or aſſiduities and fervours in their devotion. Whereas whoever

whoever conſults the Scriptures will find by the whole tenour of them, that Chriſt came to deliver us from ſin, but from puniſhment only in conſequence of the other, by delivering us from that which would incur it.

I am far from laying a ſtreſs upon the merit of good works: they are generally though not always efficacious to our better accommodation and enjoyment in this tranſitory life, but have none effect upon our future intereſts, otherwiſe than by ſtrengthening the virtues wherein the health and vigour of our ſpiritual body conſiſts. Now virtue lies ſolely in the mind, it is an habitual diſpoſition in the heart or imagination to follow readily the dictates of judgment or underſtanding, and is the ſame while lying dormant unexerciſed as when exemplified in outward acts: but our actions conſtantly flow from the diſpoſitions of the heart, therefore good works are the ſureſt evidence of our poſſeſſing the virtues, and if we fail in the performance of them according to our ſkill, ability and opportunities, however fondly we have flattered ourſelves, we may be ſure of falling deficient in the particular virtues prompting thereto. But religious virtues are not ſuch, while remaining in ſpeculative theorems, nor until taking ſtrong hold on the imagination and become habitual and practical perſuaſions, comprehended under the name of a ſaving Faith: which, as I have endeavoured to ſhow in the

Chapter

Chapter upon that article, conſiſts in a quick ſenſibility of diſtant good and evil, equally with the preſent, and in poſſeſſing juſt and lively ſentiments of the Power, the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs, the Holineſs, the Equity of God, and his government of the Univerſe together with all things great and ſmall contained therein: from whence will naturally grow a ſoothing unſhaken Hope, a thorough ſatisfaction in the lot of our exiſtence, and an unreſerved Charity to our fellow creatures as connected with ourſelves in one general intereſt.

This I apprehend figured in Scripture ſtile by coming to the Father, living to God, being his child, or becoming one with him. Had we our rational faculties in full perfection and our ſenſitive under entire command, as they are believed to have been in Adam before his fall, we might perhaps attain this ſaving Faith without foreign aid, and then ſhould need no Interceſſion to bring down that happineſs which would follow therefrom in the courſe of nature eſtabliſhed by our almighty Governor. But every man's experience, who conſults it fairly, will teſtify, that this is not the caſe, and it is the doctrine of our Church that we cannot rectify the diſorder in our internal machinery by our own management, nor without aid of the rules preſcribed, and the remedies diſpenſed in the Goſpel: for no man can come to the Father unleſs

unleſs through the Son; we muſt become incorporated with our elder brother to become children of God, and muſt live to Chriſt before we can live to Him. Yet the bare conviction of our underſtanding that ſuch rules and remedies are neceſſary, will not urge us to apply them without a firm perſuaſion of mind of their efficacy, nor can this be generated without a full dependence upon the ſkill and ability of the preſcriber.

So that Faith in Chriſt is effectual only to make us follow his regimen, and the regimen beneficial only for the health whereto it will reſtore us: for if it were poſſible for a man to perform all the peculiar duties of Chriſtianity without performing thoſe which are not peculiar, I ſhall not ſcruple to queſtion whether he would be ever the better for ſo doing. But Faith in Chriſt, is called a ſaving Faith, becauſe being the ſole and certain avenue to that which is properly ſo: therefore the concluſion of our prayers operates in the ſame manner as the other parts of them, not by moving God or Chriſt to make them more favourably diſpoſed towards us, or prevail on them to do any thing further than they have already done on our behalf, but by bringing ourſelves into a frame of mind capable of receiving benefit from the proviſions they have made for our uſe, and impreſſing deeper upon our hearts a dependence upon the all-ſufficiency of our Saviour,

Saviour, which will urge to a greater attention and diligence in applying the means he has preſcribed for attainment of a ſaving Faith.

13. Prayer is commonly parted into four kinds, Petition, Confeſſion, Interceſſion, and Thankſgiving: I have already ſaid enough of the three former, and need only now add a word upon the laſt. This deſerves the name of a divine Service more properly than any of the others, for we ſeem directly to ſerve God herein, and not ourſelves: we approach the throne of Glory, not with our troubles and wants, nor thoſe of one another, nor yet with the mortifying proſpect of our frailties and corruptions, we come in joy and alacrity of heart to offer our tribute of grateful praiſe, that only return in our power to make for all his manifold bleſſings.

And to render the tribute compleat, it behoves us to recollect as many of the bleſſings poured out upon us as we can, our Being, our health, our faculties of body and mind, our accommodations, our conveniences and pleaſures of life, the gifts of nature and fortune, thoſe we ſhare in common with our fellow creatures, with the ſpecies, with the community, with our friends, and thoſe we poſſeſs in particular ourſelves; exemptions from danger, eſcapes from miſchief, deliverance from troubles, what progreſs we have made in any virtue or uſeful improvement, what opportunities we

we have employed well, and what favourable accidents have befallen us. But then our ſacrifice muſt be of the choice firſtlings of the flock, without ſpot or blemiſh of vanity or flattery, but the ſpontaneous produce of the heart: for a force put upon the mind here will vitiate the performance more than in any other kind. The praiſe muſt be a voluntary oblation, not a grudging payment, for God loveth a chearful giver, more eſpecially in offerings made to himſelf: he ſearches into the heart, and is not to be impoſed upon ſo far as to accept whatever does not come freely from thence.

There are ſome zealots who would have us always kiſs the rod of affliction, and thank God for every exerciſe of it upon us. I do not deny that afflictions work to our benefit, and have taken pains in the courſe of this work to ſhow that they do ſo, therefore whenever we can diſcern the particular benefit accruing therefrom, we are in the right to be thankful for them; but this is very rarely the caſe, and there are many other things we may be convinced in our judgement are for our good, yet if they be not apparently ſo to our imagination, they are no proper topics of thankſgiving. I have ſhown in the proper place, that our taſtes and inclinations fluctuate, we do not always reliſh the ſame pleaſures with equal glee, nor value the good things we poſſeſs always at the ſame rate: but we ought to take the matter of

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our thankſgivings from thoſe objects which then moſt ſtrongly touch our hearts; for to thank God for what we are not ſincerely glad at poſſeſſing, is arrant flattery and compliment, it is telling him he is good, when we are not ſenſible of his goodneſs ourſelves.

The tribute of praiſe and acknowledgement is undoubtedly a duty expected from us, but we cannot pay it well out of duty: the thought of obligation can ſerve no farther than to put us upon ſearching in our reflection for proper topics of thankfulneſs, but we muſt have ſome nobler principle to actuate us in the performance. And ſurely among the innumerable bleſſings we receive, it cannot be hard for any man to pick out ſuch as at that inſtant he may feel a ſenſible joy and hearty gratitude in reflecting on. But though the conſciouſneſs of having done well in any part of our conduct is a very reaſonable matter of thankſgiving, becauſe aſcribing the whole glory to God, and the ſenſe of bleſſings, is ſtrengthened by contemplating the want of them elſewhere, yet we muſt take great heed that the compariſon be made upon things, not upon perſons, for this would lead us inſenſibly to aſſume the glory to ourſelves.

The fondneſs for excelling is a wily enchantreſs never ſufficiently to be guarded againſt, it is apt to inſinuate into all our actions and all our thoughts, and too frequently even into our

religious exercises: but vanity is the worst ingredient we can mingle among our offerings, it is worse than fear or obligation, for they only render them insipid, but this like dead flies in a point of Ointment, turns the sweet smelling savour into a noisome stench. The Pharisee, who fasted thrice a week, paid tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and gave alms of all he possessed, if he believed those things duties, was very proper in giving thanks for having performed them, had his joy arisen from the benefit they were of to himself; but it seems his joys sprung from the pride of telling God, how much superior he was to the wicked Publican: therefore he went down to his House less justified than the other, who had only smitten his breast, and said, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14. There is a seeming contradiction among the directions given in the Scriptures upon this subject: for we are warned against the Battology or vain repetitions of the heathens, yet on the other hand commanded to pray without ceasing, to continue instant in prayer, and expect to prevail by our importunity, God being likened to a man who would not rise out of his warm bed until teazed into a compliance by incessant knockings. Wherein we cannot suppose any variety either in the matter or manner of the application, for the person knocking wanted only one thing, a loaf of bread, nor does

does it appear that he played any change of tunes in drumming againſt the door. But wherever there are ſeeming contradictions, we may conſider the two branches of them as intended to guard us againſt two oppoſite extremes; for ſo the exhortations to induſtry, and to take no thought for the morrow, are levelled againſt the contrary vices of idleneſs, and anxious ſolicitude: and if we recollect what has been argued above concerning the effect of prayer being worked ſolely upon ourſelves, not upon the Almighty, it may help to diſcover what thoſe extremes are.

For while we conceit ourſelves able to move the heavenly Powers, we ſhall be apt to imagine the effect owing to the vehemence and repetition of the impulſe, not to the temper and diſpoſition of mind wherein we gave it: juſt as a man who goes to puſh a ſtone along, it is no matter whether he does it in anger or fear or wantonneſs, or out of obligation, the ſtone will move according to the ſtrength and number of his thruſts, not according to the ſtate of his mind. And ſo the Papiſts ſeem to apprehend the matter, for they believe that twenty Ave Mary's run off without any devotion, like twenty ſhillings dropped careleſsly into a man's hand, are worth juſt as much again as ten. Or if we look upon the manner of performing them as material, ſtill while retaining the opinion of their changing the diſpoſition of God towards

us, we ſhall value ourſelves thereupon, and claim the title of obedient ſervants, and very righteous people for our aſſiduities and devotion. Or if we get rid of that notion, but have none of their operating upon ourſelves, we may regard them as ſuperſtitious and fooliſh, to be complied with only now and then for faſhion ſake, and to avoid giving offence.

Whereas if we look for the benefit of our prayers in the effect they work upon ourſelves, and reflect on their manner of operation, we ſhall ſee ſufficient reaſon for being aſſiduous and importunate in them; becauſe elſe they cannot produce an habitual and permanent change in the mind. I have obſerved in a former place, that there are two ways to happineſs, one by procuring the objects we deſire, the other by bringing deſire to fix upon the objects in our power, or that are proper for us, or upon courſes of conduct conducive to our benefit: the former depends upon fortune and external circumſtances, the latter lies more under our own management; and herein conſiſts the art we are to learn from Religion and Morality. I have likewiſe ſhown that deſires have their ſeat in the imagination, for what we know very well in the judgment of our underſtanding to be good, does not touch us in the expectation, nor give us a pleaſurable ſenſe in the poſſeſſion, until we have gotten an appetite towards it

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which appetite, if it be not among thoſe given by nature, can be acquired only by habit.

Now prayer has a natural efficacy to raiſe a deſire for the things we pray for, and a reliſh to the objects then holden under contemplation, but it muſt be by continual bending that deſire and ſentiment can be brought to remain in their proper ply, which will give us a permanent habitual happy temper of mind, rendering us willingly obedient to the Will of God, eaſy and ſatisfied within ourſelves, prudent in our conduct, and heartily diſpoſed towards one another. Therefore we need not regard ſtile nor variety of expreſſion, any farther than we find requiſite upon our own account to keep our reverence and attention alive: for whatever, and how lately ſoever repeated, we can offer with unabated vigour and earneſtneſs, will anſwer the purpoſe as well as if it were new dreſſed, and furbiſhed up.

Hence appears there is no irreverence in a common form of liturgy: for we muſt not expect to pleaſe God by the novelty and copiouſneſs of our diction, but by the ſincerity and heartineſs of our application. Then as moſt prayers begin with an exordium alike ſuitable to introduce deprecation, confeſſion, interceſſion, petition, or thankſgiving, and the gifted in extempore prayers are extremely ſlow in their pronunciation, I ſhould think the hearer muſt loſe ſeveral minutes in expectance before

he can know the proper poſture to caſt his mind into, preparatory for what follows.

15. Nevertheleſs how little ground ſoever there may be, either in reaſon or Scripture, to believe ſeriouſly that we can move God, it may be ſerviceable to take up ſuch an idea for the time while employed in our devotions, as it will help us conſiderably in the due performance of them. For as obſerved in former places, we find it many times convenient to conceive of things otherwiſe than we know them to be; we commonly apprehend the Sun moving from Eaſt to Weſt, though in our conſiderate judgment we are convinced of the contrary; we give way to a temporary perſuaſion of the tranſactions being real as we ſee repreſented in a play, or deſcribed in a poem or a novel, without which we could receive neither pleaſure nor inſtruction therefrom; Tully directs the orator to poſſeſs his imagination ſtrongly with the cauſe being his own, or he will not be able to plead it effectually; and he that enters upon a difficult undertaking, will be more likely to ſucceed for believing that he ſhall: in like manner by putting on a temporary perſuaſion of wreſting a favour from God, we may be encouraged to apply more ſtrenuouſly, and ſhall work a ſtronger impreſſion upon our minds.

And this temporary perſuaſion is ſo neceſſary as to make it expedient for the vulgar, or thoſe who

who live almoſt wholly by imagination and very little by underſtanding, to indulge in them a permanent perſuaſion of the like nature, rather than they ſhould be wanting in the temporary: for they will ſee no abſurdities flowing therefrom, and ſo cannot be hurt by it, unleſs miſled by deſigning or enthuſiaſtic perſons. But for ſuch as have any command over their imagination, and are able to make the diſtinction, conſidering the dangers before mentioned appendant to the notion of prevailing upon God to alter his meaſures or his diſpoſition towards us, it is better they ſhould caſt that notion aſide as ſoon as they come out from their devotions; that they may not regard them as virtues, but rather as means preſcribed by their Saviour for the attainment of virtue. Yet even in that light they may rejoice at having performed them well, as a man may rejoice at having gained ſomething that he can turn to his advantage: ſtill eſtimating their condition, not by their religious exerciſes, but by the habits and ſentiments of mind they poſſeſs, which are beſt evidenced and ſtrengthened by works, but by divine ſervices only in failure of ſufficient opportunities for performing good works.

They may then eſcape the danger of being righteous over much, which can only happen by placing righteouſneſs in that which it is not, for it is impoſſible to be really and truly

righteous overmuch: and ſo it is to live too well, but by living well is commonly underſtood eating high and plentifully, and in that ſence it is certain that many live too well, ſo as to hurt their health and fill their bodies with humours and diſtempers. But if it be ſaid that our ſpiritual food is of too pure a nature ever to ſurfeit, this I ſhall not diſpute, but then our food does not conſiſt in acts of devotion, for if we will imitate our Saviour, our meat and drink ought to be doing the Will of God: ſo that the externals of Religion are not our food but our ſpiritual phyſic, neceſſary in this fallen ſtate to correct the vicious humours in our conſtitution, and bring our internal organs into a proper tone for digeſting their natural food. But every body knows phyſic may be overdone, and it may be miſapplied, as it certainly is when the timorous and low-ſpirited are driven into perpetual ſelf-deniais, faſtings and humiliations.

Therefore if we conſider prayer as a remedy in the ſpiritual diſpenſary, though no part of it ought to be omitted in due proportion, yet we ſhall ſee cauſe to preſcribe the four ſeveral ſpecies of it more copiouſly for particular patients: confeſſion for the proud, the ſanguine and the pleaſure-hunters; petition for the thoughtleſs, and the worldly-minded; interceſſion for the ſelfiſh, the ill-natured and the paſſionate; and thankſgiving for the fearful, the melan-

melancholy and the diſcontented. This laſt may be thought an improper application, for where ſhall the diſcontented find any matter for praiſe? I expect they will be at a loſs at firſt, but after ſome practice, beginning with evils that might have befallen worſe than thoſe they complain of, and noting well in memory whatever touches them at any time, they will perceive the liſt increaſe ſurprizingly, and ſoon diſcover many things to rejoice at and be thankful for, which they could not have thought of before.

But though I would have every man be ſo far his own phyſician as to obſerve the ſucceſs of his remedies, yet he ought not to rely ſolely upon experience, but conſult the written and received rules, and take the recommendation of perſons whom in his beſt judgment he ſees reaſon to confide in: for it is not uncommon with medicines of the alterative kind, as are all thoſe we have been ſpeaking of, to take good effect though the patient himſelf does not perceive it. However let him beware of Quacks, leſt they draw him in by their vehemence and poſitiveneſs to place a faith in their Noſtrums and Panaceas, as efficacious to cure all diſtempers, paſt, preſent and to come.

16. There is another religious performance, which if it cannot take rank as a ſpecies of prayer, yet bears a near affinity therewith, becauſe operating in the ſame manner, viz. by impreſ-

impreſſing the ideas it contains more ſtrongly upon the imagination; and this is, Singing. It anſwers more particularly to that ſpecies called Thankſgiving: therefore Saint Paul directs, if any be ſad, let him pray; if joyful, let him ſing pſalms. We have obſerved that importunity and repetition work more upon the imagination, than argument: now in Singing, the words are drawn out, and the ſame thoughts made to dwell upon the mind longer than in any other way. Therefore you find that in clubs and parties they have their ſongs, which are known to encourage them greatly in their ſeveral ways of thinking, eſpecially among the populace.

It was much uſed by the primitive Chriſtians, by the firſt Reformers, and in the beginnings of moſt ſects: but what vitiates it in eſtabliſhed Churches, is the fondneſs for an exquiſite taſte in Muſic, which wholly draws off all attention from the thought to the ſound, and renders it impracticable for the vulgar to join in the Chorus. Go to an Italian Opera, and you will hear the ſingers ſo clip and mangle their words, that, without a book in your hand, you will looſe even the little ſenſe they contain. Not but that good Muſic may be employed to give ſtrength to the expreſſions, as witneſs the Coronation Anthem, the Meſſiah, and other of Handel's performances: but there are few of the compoſers who know how

to

to do this, or even endeavour it. Beſides that thoſe pieces ought to be executed by good and ſkilful voices, who cannot be followed by a common congregation.

The ſongs inſpiring party zeal and the ſpirit of drinking, are generally very bad muſic, badly executed, being rather roars or ſquawls than ſongs: yet have they their full weight upon the Company. I doubt not that many a jolly toper has bawled out, The Soph he is immortal, and never can decay, for how ſhould he return to duſt, who daily wets his clay? until he has ſung himſelf into a full perſuaſion of that witticiſm being a ſolid argument, which would juſtify him in his aſſiduities at the bottle. And though the Quaker never ſings profeſſedly, yet the whine and aukward cadence and ſee-ſaw action, wherewith the Spirit vents itſelf in his ſermons, may be called a baſtard-finging: and perhaps that is all there is affecting in them. Thus it appears by manifold experience, that finging even of the moſt hideous kind is a powerful engine for working ſentiments into the mind. I never was a finger myſelf, ſo can ſpeak only upon obſervation of things around; and I think it manifeſt from thence, that finging, judiciouſly applied, might be turned to excellent ſervice.

It is our buſineſs to ſtudy human nature, by what media it is affected, and in what manner they ſeverally touch it. In matters relative to

our

our own conduct, we muſt conſult our own temperament and conſtitution, but when the public is concerned, regard ought to be had to human nature in general: nor may we pretend to faint away at the ſcreamings of a country Church, becauſe we happen to have a fine ear, and delicate taſte for muſic. The cuſtom in ſome places of breeding up a ſet of ſingers to perform according to the rules of art, has, I apprehend, proved a greater hinderance than furtherance to devotion; as the reſt of the people let them ſing by themſelves, and attend ſolely to their quavers, without heeding the ſubſtance of what they ſing. If they were permitted to ſing as long as they pleaſed after ſervice is over, it might be of good uſe to withhold ſuch as choſe to ſtay with them from other amuſements leſs ſuitable to the day. The only help to the congregation ſeems to be that of an organ, whereon the operator may flouriſh about as he likes in the ſymphony, but when he comes to lead the tune, there ſhould be nothing of levity or wantonneſs, nor affectation to ſhow a nimbleneſs and dexterity of finger.

In compoſing manuals of devotion and collections of hymns, regard ſhould be had to the nature of the mind, particularly her ſenſitive faculty, which is the ſeat of perſuaſion; in order to inculcate ſuch ſentiments there as may conduce to a happy and uſeful life. The former is applicable for rectifying our deſires, and the

the latter for thoſe joyful reflections that ſpring from Religion: but then proviſion ſhould be made for improving all of them, not confining the thoughts to one, or a few. The Methodiſts and others of ſimilar turn, who deal moſt largely in hymns, lay them all out upon the Redemption: but though this be the principal topic of joyful praiſe, it is not the only one. They are ſo zealous for the Son, that they totally overlook the Father: whereas the Son himſelf has told them that he came not to ſeek his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him; that he is the way and the life, that is, the way to life, which cannot be attained by ſaying, Lord, Lord, nor unleſs by coming to the Father. Let them then conſider by what ſentiments of mind they may come neareſt to the Father, what ſources of comfort and hope and joy may ſeverally ariſe from contemplation of the Attributes and government of Providence, and prepare forms for encouraging theſe in the breaſt: ſo that every pious Chriſtian may find a ready help for ſpeeding his approach in that particular track, which, in his preſent diſpoſition of mind and of external circumſtances, he feels himſelf moſt apt to purſue.

17. I do not know whether I ſhall not be counted an old faſhioned fellow in recommending thoſe unpremeditated addreſſes to heaven called ejaculations, eſpecially of the laudatory kind:

kind: but I cannot help thinking they contribute greatly to preſerve a habit of chearful piety, to keep the mind ſerene and eaſy within itſelf, to double the reliſh of our innocent pleaſures, and wean us from ſuch as are not quite ſo. But thoſe exerciſes muſt be ſhort, flowing ſpontaneouſly from the occaſion, not ſtudied nor made a taſk of: our buſineſs is to watch the little emotions in our heart, and encourage, never to force them, nor ſuffer them to leave a ſolemnity upon the thoughts or countenance, ſo as to ſupply fuel for ſpiritual vanity, or prove an interruption to other matters in hand.

Profane ſwearing has a like efficacy, only works the contrary way, and therefore may not improperly be ſtiled ejaculating to the Devil, who is ſometimes addreſſed therein by name: for it helps to confirm an habitual contempt of Religion and all the terms belonging to it, and for that reaſon I preſume was firſt introduced by ſuch as thought they had too ſtrong a ſenſe of Religion inculcated into them by the nurſe and the prieſt, in order to get rid of it, and muſt be owned a ſovereign remedy for that purpoſe. For a like reaſon probably, it was encouraged among the ſoldiery, becauſe he who is to be afraid of nothing, ſhould learn to fear neither God nor the Devil: and this maxim may be right while courage is underſtood to be an inſenſibility of danger, not a principle

principle of prudence enabling to deſpiſe an imminent evil in contemplation of a greater diſtant good.

If this practice ever did any good, it muſt be by ſilencing cant and hypocriſy, and ſo, like one poiſon, ſerving as an antidote to expell another. Nevertheleſs as the diſciple is taught to imitate the unjuſt ſteward in his provident forecaſt for the future, and the ſaint may ſtrive to copy the devil in his induſtry and perſeverance; ſo the pious ejaculator may learn of the common ſwearer his ſpontaneity and eaſe of expreſſion, and his readineſs in mingling it among common tranſactions, without breaking off the train of thought he was engaged in by other buſineſs: but I would not have him imitate his vanity, nor aim to be thought a ſaint as the other does to be thought a wit, by the vehemence and fluency of his performances aided with geſtures and turns of the eye reſpectively ſuitable to the occaſion.

There is another form of devotion, which for the ſhortneſs may be reckoned approaching to the ejaculatory kind, called grace at meals: this our forefathers uſed to regard as a ſerious affair, but it is now growing obſolete. The maſter of a family, or parſon, where there is one preſent, mumbles over a few words which nobody can hear, as if he was aſhamed of his office; the ladies adjuſt their dreſs, the citizen eyes the ſmoaking viands, the beau pretends to

riſe

riſe from his chair juſt when it is over, the ſervants clatter the plates and glaſſes, every body looks upon it as an antiquated ceremony ſtill kept up they do not know why, only becauſe they were uſed to it. When a company of Young fellows get together, who in all ages and countries have ever been wiſer than their fathers, they deſpiſe it as a ridiculous form. In polite aſſemblies, gentlemen of fortune and knowledge of the world, ſcorn ſubmiting to vulgar cuſtoms whereof they ſee no uſe.

But why ſhould it be deemed of no uſe, becauſe ſo frequently none is made of it? and this may be preſumed owing to their looking for the uſe in the wrong place, namely, in making the victuals more nutritive or aſſiſting our powers of digeſtion, which ſavouring too ſtrongly of the marvelous, I do not wonder they reject it. Whereas this exerciſe tends to cheriſh the habit of referring thoſe things to the gift of Providence which we receive from natural cauſes: that main ſupport both of Philoſophy and Religion, without which the former would degenerate into Atheiſm, and the latter become all miracle, occult quality, and ſuperſtition. And ſince the continual converſe among ſenſible objects, which we are obliged to keep up by our bodily wants and occaſions, draws us unwarily into a forgetfulneſs of intellectual truths; it muſt be of no ſmall ſervice to break the attraction by caſting a glance beyond

beyond the ſtream of ſecond cauſes up to their original fountain, at the opening and cloſe of every meal. Surely there are no pleaſures of company ſo precious, but we might afford a little quarter minute from them for this ſervice.

But religious thoughts are ſuch ſtiff and heavy things that people are afraid, leſt, if they ſuffer them to poſſeſs their minds for a quarter of a minute, they ſhall not get rid of them again in a quarter of an hour, nor be able to reſume their gaiety. If any find inconveniences of this ſort, it is rather owing to the ſtiffneſs of their faculties than unwieldineſs of the objects: therefore they have the greater need to practiſe an exerciſe which will bring their mental organs more ſupple. We are all extremely fond of having our Will: but the greateſt and moſt valuable command is that over our thoughts, enabling us to think of what we will, and when we will, and as long as we will.

18. In the Chapter on Reaſon in the firſt Volume, I have compared Underſtanding and Imagination to a rider and his horſe. The compleat horſeman is maſter of all the paces of his beaſt, can turn him to right or left, put him ſuddenly into a round trot or gallop, and ſtop him again in an inſtant; he may let him ſometimes prance and caper and curvet when he judges proper, but never againſt his liking:

ſo it is the perfection of reaſon to have the inferior faculties under controul, to put imagination into any train, and reſume the former again at pleaſure; There are not wanting examples of ſuch pliancy of imagination among mankind.

When Counſel at the bar are in the middle of an intereſting argument, the Cryer calls out, Make way for the grand Jury: the orator ſuddenly breaks off, jokes and laughs among his acquaintance, and as ſoon as the bills are delivered, and the Foreman has made his bow, inſtantly reſumes his thread of argument where he had left off. A man expert in buſineſs, being called out of a room full of giggling girls, may talk ſeriouſly of important affairs, give his orders compleatly, and then upon his return enter fully into the merriment going forward. We are told Ceſar could dictate to three amanuenſes together, in doing which he muſt caſt his attention to and fro ſucceſſively between the trains belonging to three different ſubjects. So that it is poſſible to gain the art of graſping our ideas without letting them graſp upon the mind, or take ſuch gluey hold as that we cannot wipe off at pleaſure: and tho' we muſt not expect to run ſuch lengths as Ceſar, it will be worth while to make what progreſs we can, eſpecially with reſpect to the moſt ſerious ſubjects. For ſince our condition of life neceſſitates us to be perpetually converſant

verſant amongſt other matters of a very different kind, we ſhall have the more time for applying effectually to both, the leſs we loſe in the paſſage from one to tother, and ſhall be able to intermingle them more frequently without damage or hinderance to one another: whereby all parts of our conduct, as well the trivial as the momentous, like the main timbers and embelliſhments of a building, may become one whole, conſtructed upon a uniform and conſiſtent plan.

But we ſhall never compaſs this without learning to think eaſily on religious topics; for laborious taſks cannot be gone upon without painful preparation, nor will preſently leave the reflection at liberty for any thing elſe: and one would imagine, there ſhould need little exhortation to think eaſily upon Religion with our compatriots, who are ſo fond of doing every thing eaſily, and value themſelves ſo much upon it. Only the eaſe they admire is not that ariſing from expertneſs, but from negligence and averſeneſs to trouble: the eaſe of the idle boy, who ſlubbers over his leſſon, not that of the proficient who has it current at his fingers ends. They follow the preſent impulſe of fancy or gale of faſhion in every thing, and this they call moving with eaſe; never conſidering there is a wide difference between doing things eaſily, and doing things that any body can eaſily do: whereas the true maſterly eaſe is the child of

application and practice, nor will ever be attained by him who resolves to do nothing he cannot easily do.

And this art of performing the most serious offices easily, and yet effectually, would be very serviceable for the godly to study, as it will clear them from affectation of godliness: which is the grand obstacle against its spreading, because rendering it distasteful to others. For affectation is always a stiff and forced thing, the very reverse to easiness: therefore whoever would gain this quality must attend solely for the time to the thing he is about, assuming no countenance nor gestures that do not flow naturally from it, having nothing of other people in his thoughts. For though he may wish to cast a good influence upon them, it would be improper to take pains upon that account: he had better leave example and sympathy to their chance of what effect they will work upon the by-standers. For Virtue like other beauties, is ever most amiable when appearing unconscious of her charms: and does greatest execution, when most undesigning.

19. Having examined the nature of divine services, and found their efficacy lies in impressing salutary dispositions and sentiments in the heart or imagination, it is obvious that an operation upon that faculty may be aided by forms, ceremonies, external appearance, example and sympathy: whence springs the expedience of public

public ſervices, wherein a whole congregation, joining in the ſame form of worſhip, may do their work more effectually than they could have done ſingly by themſelves. For if perſons in the ſame way of thinking upon ſecular affairs fortify themſelves in their ſentiments, and become better united by aſſembling frequently together, why ſhould not the like effect flow naturally from religious aſſemblies, were they reſorted to in the ſame view, and not out of meer cuſtom or obligation?

But if there were not certain ſtated times appointed for aſſembling, how ſhould each man know when the reſt were diſpoſed to aſſemble? Nor perhaps would they ever ſtand ſo diſpoſed, or turn their thoughts upon their ſpiritual concerns at all, without the idea of an obligation urging them to it at particular ſeaſons: for it is well known how backward people are to find a time of their own accord for matters of buſineſs not of diverſion, which they apprehend might be done at any time. Therefore the command to keep holy every ſeventh day had a rational foundation in human nature: not that there was an intrinſic ſacredneſs in the day, which then could not have been changed from the ſeventh, to the firſt, for the alteration was not made, by divine command iſſued from the mouth of our ſecond lawgiver, nor recorded in the Goſpel, but by unanimous conſent of the firſt Chriſtians, pro-

bably to overthrow the ſuperſtitious notion of an intrinſic virtue in the day.

I make no doubt that worſhip performed with the ſame ſincerity, heartineſs and devotion on a Thurſday would be as effectual to all intents and purpoſes as on a Sunday: but it is not to be ſuppoſed that a man who neglects it at the appointed time, will perform it at any other. And a ceſſation from all common buſineſs, other than works of real neceſſity and charity, on that day, is likewiſe requiſite as men are conſtituted: for elſe they would be perpetually finding excuſes for non-attendance on their religious exerciſes, from avocations and impediments unexpectedly falling in their way. Beſides that very few have ſuch a compliant imagination as recommended in the laſt ſection, which will bear turning ſuddenly into the moſt oppoſite trains of thinking, without leaving a tincture of thoſe engaged in before, or a hankering after thoſe to follow next in ſucceſſion: therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary to keep clear of all worldly attachments, that their minds may ſtand ready to fall into the poſture proper for the buſineſs of the day. At leaſt I would not adviſe any body to indulge himſelf in taking liberties with Sundays, until he can ſay a grace with full devotion, in the midſt of gaieties immediately before and after, without ſuffering a ſingle idea of them to intrude

trude during the few moments of his addreſs to Heaven.

Nevertheleſs if any man imagines Sundays of no uſe to himſelf, for that he can think of Religion as much as becomes a gentleman without them, yet it is an unpardonable negligence to take no concern for other folks. People are apt to cry, What ſhall we be the better for going to Church, or nodding over a muſty book in the evening inſtead of taking an innocent game at cards: but they ſhould go on to aſk one little queſtion farther, What hurt may we do our neighbours, or the family? If I ſtay away from Church, I may propably apply to my Chapters, which often turn upon matters not wholly unſuitable for a Sunday's employment: if my neighbour the Cobler ſtays away, he goes to the alehouſe, an employment leſs uſeful than that he follows on his working days; and he thinks he copies my example herein, becauſe we both agree in that circumſtance of abſenting from the public ſervice.

For the generality can look no farther than to the outward behaviour, and think a conformity in that neceſſarily infers a thorough conformity of character: therefore it behoves us to remember Saint Paul's maxim, All things are lawful but all things are not expedient, and apply it to the preſent occaſion; if what I am about to do be ever ſo harmleſs for me, yet while it may offend my brother, I will refrain.

Hence appears that, to uſe the ſofteſt name, it is a high degree of inconſiderateneſs to do or omit any thing, whereby Sunday may fall into diſregard: for how much ſoever we may perſuade ourſelves a form is needleſs for us, it is certainly needful for the greater part of mankind, who cannot enter into the reaſons of things, but muſt be led into the ſubſtance by means of the form, and will catch at any authority or example of their betters to excuſe them from the form, which is irkſome to them becauſe they do not diſcern its relation to the ſubſtance.

The ceſſation from buſineſs makes Sunday more improper for a day of jollity to the populace, than any other: for on other days they are reſtrained from waſting too much of their time by the neceſſary attendance to their work and profeſſions, and kept in ſome decorum by perſons of ſober deportment mingling among them: but on Sundays, the ſerious are all drawn off to attend their devotions, riot and wantonneſs has no check nor controul, but the giddy and the libertine are left to themſelves to improve one another in their extravagances. Aſſemblies of ſuch perſons, all in the ſame way of thinking or rather of thoughtleſſneſs, may be termed anti-divine ſervices: for as I ſaid in the laſt ſection of profane ſwearing compared with ejaculation, they will naturally have an equal influence with the Church

ſervices,

ſervices, but working the contrary way, eſpecially ſince thoſe anti-ejaculations commonly bear a great part in the ceremony. Wherefore it muſt be expected they will bring upon the frequenters a callouſneſs againſt all ſenſe of Religion, decency and order, and fit them for practices moſt oppoſite to the Will of God. Accordingly we find that ſuch of our malefactors as make a penitent exit, and will give any true account of themſelves, always declare, that the beginning of their ruin was owing to the cuſtom of ſabbath breaking.

20. The ſame reaſon that directs to the appointment of times, avails likewiſe for the appropriation of particular places to divine worſhip: for as our lives paſs in a continual ſucceſſion of ſenſitive and reflective ideas, thoſe of both ſorts will run together in cluſters, and whenever any one of the bundle happens to be excited, the reſt will follow in train mechanically. This has been noted by perſons of thought and obſervation in different branches of learning: Mr Locke has a Chapter upon Aſſociation, which whoever takes the trouble to peruſe, need not long remain unſatisfied: or if he has the curioſity to ſee the ſame ſubject handled in another manner, he may turn back to my two Chapters upon Combination and Trains in the firſt Volume. Tully obſerves the connection that prevails between places and things depoſited in them by the fancy alone, from

from whence he ſays Simonides took the hint for ſtriking out his art of memory: by which an orator, taking a large place containing, a multitude of compartiments, all perfectly familiar to him, and ſtationing therein the ſeveral materials of his oration, repreſented by figures or images, in his imagination, they will occur to him again readily in their proper order as wanted. And there is ſcarce any-body but muſt have taken notice that on going into a ſchool, a council chamber, a work ſhop, or a ball room, where he has been frequently engaged, he will find his thoughts run ſpontaneouſly upon the ſubjects then uſed to occupy them in thoſe places.

In like manner the entrance into a Church, ſet apart for holy purpoſes, caſts ſomething of an awe and ſolemnity upon the mind, and would caſt more, were people careful to carry none but holy purpoſes in with them. Therefore a ſobriety and decency of deportment is neceſſary to give the Church its ſacred influence: for it does not operate by charm, nor magic, nor occult quality of the building, but by the natural coheſion of ſenſitive ideas with thoſe of reflection, wherewith they have been conſtantly united and kept clear of foreign mixtures.

And to our ſhame it muſt be owned, that the common people are better behaved in this reſpect than their ſuperiors, for though they gather

gather in knots in the Churchyard to talk of their private affairs, of news, of fairs, of cricket-matches, yet when entered the doors, they throw aſide all thoſe amuſements, and during their continuance within, preſerve at leaſt an appearance of ſerioufneſs: whereas the polite vulgar nod, and laugh and giggle, fidget to and fro, and whiſper, or play antic tricks, and loll about with an affectation of careleſsneſs, reſolved to do wrong rather than not aſſert their liberty of doing what they will: I ſuppoſe the difference is owing to the meaner ſort ſtanding in awe of the parſon, as believing him a great man; but the gentry eſteeming themſelves above him, ſtand in none. If this be the caſe, it ſhows the greater need of ſomething external to ſtrike a mechanical awe upon perſons who have not judgment and diſcretion enough of their own to keep them in decency and order.

The Church is the moſt improper place in the world for aſſerting privileges, and keeping up diſtinctions: when we come there, we are not ſquires and ladies, ſhopkeepers, plowmen, and dairy-maids; we are Chriſtians and nothing elſe, all equally entitled to the privileges and benefits of that place, according as we comport ourſelves in it. Therefore if I were Pope, I would decree that the poor man ſhould put on his beſt cloaths and the rich man his worſt, that there might be the nearer expreſ-

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ſion of equality. For the ſame reaſon I would prohibit all pompous titles and courtly epithets: theſe things are very proper in the world to increaſe our reverence for thoſe whom God has ſet in authority over us, but let every thing be done in its proper place; let us render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's, and to God the things that are God's. When entred upon ſacred ground, we are to pay our Court ſolely to heaven, not to our fellow ſervants though placed in office above us: there ſhould be no majeſties nor highneſſes nor moſt noble patrons, reverends nor right reverends, nor by what ſtile or title ſoever dignified or diſtinguiſhed; but the ſame decent plainneſs of ſtile preſerved throughout as in the morning prayer for the clergy and people, and that in the communion ſervice intitled for the Church militant.

It is written, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them: but then the gathering muſt be in his name, that is under a ſenſe of his immediate preſence, or it will have no avail, for that it is which brings him down among us. For God is really and ſubſtantially preſent every where, alike intelligent and obſervant in the common parlour as at the altar, the only difference is made by the ſtate of our internal optics: whenever they are ſet towards him, he ſtands before us; when they diſcern nothing of him, he is abſent; and is more or leſs immediately

diately preſent, according to the diſpoſition whereinto they are fallen, which diſpoſition the ſolemnity of the place helps to caſts them into.

Wherever devotions can be paid with equal piety of heart, they will be accepted alike: but this cannot be done in all places indiſcriminately without ſome extraordinary circumſtance to fix the attention. Suppoſe a man ſeized with a diſtemper that will ſuffer nothing to paſs through him; he has tried ſeveral remedies in vain, and given himſelf over: if at laſt he finds them begin to take effect, I conceive he may offer as pure and acceptable a thankſgiving from his cloſe ſtool, as ever he did from a haſſoc in his pew: but ordinarily, when there is no uncommon incident to raiſe a ſtrong emotion upon the mind, it is of great moment what objects are ſurrounding us. Let any man try whether he can throw his thoughts into whatever poſture he pleaſes, while kneeling down upon a dunghill in the midſt of cows, and hogs and poultry: therefore he need not deſpiſe the aid of external appearances, but let him remember they are only aids; for neither they, nor the holy Spirit will do any thing for us, they only aſſiſt our endeavours in what we ſtrive to do for ourſelves.

From what has been ſaid above it appears, there may be a real uſe in the conſecration of Churches: not that it conjures down a ſuper-

natural influence into the ſtones or the mortar, the pulpit or the pews, but becauſe it begins the aſſociation between the place and devout ideas to be connected therewith, and ſerves for a warning to the people to admit no diſcordant ideas to mingle in the train. Therefore there is an expedience in keeping places once appropriated to ſacred uſes, from being employed in any others, which would diſſolve the aſſociation that gives them their ſalutary influence. After the care I have taken all along to examine every thing by nature and natural cauſes, I ſhall hope to ſtand acquitted of all fondneſs for charm and for the marvellous: yet for all that, ſhould make a ſcruple to play at cards, join in a country dance, bargain for a horſe, or apply to any other profane employment in a Church. Not that I ſhould think my profanation could draw any virtue away from the materials or ſtructure of the edifice, or render it leſs fit for the uſes of other perſons who ſhould never know what I have been doing: but becauſe I ſhould apprehend it might by natural effect prove an unconſecrating the place with reſpect to myſelf, and ſuch as might know of my levities, by making it introduce them mechanically to the reflection at other times, and thereby diſſociating thoſe trains it was intended to aſſiſt in ſtriking upon the mind.

21. Nor

21. Nor do places alone deſerve regard for their natural effect to keep imagination to her proper cue: but likewiſe things employed in them, veſtments, utenſils, and ſtations for performing the ſeveral offices. There is a greater exactneſs requiſite upon thoſe articles for a groſs and ignorant people, wherefore we find very minute directions given thereupon in the Jewiſh ceremonial, for which we muſt preſume there was a good reaſon: for if we will needs deny them to have been of divine appointment but the impoſitions of Moſes, ſtill upon this hypotheſis, we muſt allow him to have been a ſhrewd and crafty politician, who knew well what he did, and that they would work a ſtrong effect upon the minds of the people, or elſe he would never have thought it worth while to employ them. But as mankind grows more rational, there is leſs occaſion for application by the ſenſes: perhaps little more is needful for us than ſuch a neatneſs and decency in external appearances, as may not catch away the attention either by their finery or their ſlovenlineſs.

But that objects ſurrounding have no influence upon the minds of the company, is contrary to experience in the common cuſtoms of life: why elſe have we our dining-rooms, where things are kept a little more ſpruce and elegant than in the common rooms for family uſe? A parcel of young folks might once for a frolic be

be very merry together in a barn hung all round with enormous cobwebs; and even in that caſe the novelty of the thing, and oddity of the furniture might have an effect to increaſe their merriment: but whoever ſhould make a practice of receiving his company in this equipage, I fear would find the eaſe of converſation greatly clogged thereby; unleſs it happened to turn upon rallying him for the peculiarity of his taſte. Therefore ſuch as aim ſolely at the pleaſures of converſation, and think nothing of drawing an admiration of their wealth or elegance of taſte, will be careful to exhibit a ſcene that may neither offend, nor engage the eye.

Not that I mean to condemn all regard to elegance in private houſes, but in a Church none other aim is allowable beſides that of the benefit of converſation with heaven: therefore the pomp of Popery is as faulty as a total negligence; it might indeed be very right to anſwer the purpoſes intended by it, which were to draw off the veneration for Religion, and turn it into a veneration for the perſons officiating. Yet it ſeems expedient there ſhould be ſome diſtinction of dreſs, and ſome little reſerve of behaviour in thoſe, who make profeſſion of diſpenſing holy things, that the appearance of the perſon may co-aſſiſt with the appearance of the ſtructure. Neither is there a viſible impropriety that he ſhould officiate in

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one garb when acting as the mouth of the congregation to lead them in their adorations to the throne of Glory, and in another when he takes the part of a teacher employing human reaſon to expound the ſacred oracles, and apply them to our particular uſes: for ſomething more ſolemnity of mind is proper for the people to exerciſe their Religion, than to learn it.

Nor is the variety in our ſervice without its uſe for relieving and awakening the attention, for we ſhall find now and then that ſome parts of it are long enough to afford time for a comfortable nap. If ſhort forms and ceremonies are ſo neceſſary, that Chriſtians of all denominations, even thoſe who affect to declare loudeſt againſt them, find it impracticable to do without them: they all have their particular places of worſhip, which they are careful to keep in what they eſteem decency: and their badges of diſtinction, be it a black cap, a cloak, or coat of a peculiar cut, for their miniſtry. Even the gifted prieſteſs among the Quakers is known by her green apron; and the brotherhood though pretending to regard nothing but the inner man, yet are ſo conſcientiouſly attached to externals, that I ſuppoſe they would ſooner burn at the ſtake, than abate an inch of their broad brimed hat. In the laſt century, while a real ſanctity was endeavoured to be placed in externals, it was a noble ſtruggle for religious liberty to prevent this notion from

ſpreading among the people by oppoſing other externals againſt them: but now nobody retains ſuch notion of their containing an intrinſic virtue, the charge of ſuperſtition lies at the door of thoſe who imagine them to carry an intrinſic malignity. For reaſon pronounces them alike indifferent either way: therefore there is as much ſuperſtition to the full in believing the ſervice cannot be read devoutly in a ſurplice, as that it cannot be ſo read without one.

22. Having thus eſſayed an explanation of the manner wherein externals help us forward in the work of Salvation, by aſſiſting to bring the mind into a diſpoſition proper for our moſt important duties, and ſo becoming the natural means of grace, the reſult will be, that a due regard for them deſerves to be carefully inculcated, eſpecially upon the young, the giddy, and the ignorant, who will be leaſt capable of underſtanding their method of operation and wherein their real efficacy lies. Therefore they muſt be made to prevail in ſuch way as can be effected, the more rational undoubtedly the better: but theory muſt ſometimes give way to practicability, and he that cannot do as he would, muſt do as he can, rather than do nothing, to attain a good end. Where the natural effects cannot be rendered manifeſt, God may be repreſented as giving us arbitrary commands: yet whatever is enjoined by him, or

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by perſons delegated under him to give directions in matters of indifference, may be taken upon credit to carry a real expedience we cannot diſcern.

If this be too refined and abſtruſe to ſink into ſome imaginations, recourſe muſt be had directly to command, obligation and fear: the duties muſt be enjoined as indiſpenſible, iſſuing from divine authority, or human derived therefrom, whoſe commands are not to be diſputed nor diſobeyed, without drawing down heavy miſchiefs upon the tranſgreſſor. But then particular care ſhould be taken, both in the choice of things to be enjoined and manner of expreſſion concerning them, to give no handle for apprehending an occult quality inherent in them, or ſupernatural efficacy annexed to them: it ſeems the beſt way to pronounce them in general ſacred and neceſſary, without deſcending into particular explanations. If any perſon not content with the general idea of obligation will join there to akind of magical virtue, becauſe incapable of conceiving an efficacy any other way, it is not to be avoided, nor will it do him any hurt: for ſuperſtition we have ſaid before is relative, and the groſſeſt apprehenſions are ſufficiently pure to him, whom God has not endued with an underſtanding capable of better.

Religion will accommodate itſelf to all capacities, and if not deſignedly corrupted by poli-

tic or enthuſiaſtic mixtures, will turn into nouriſhment ſalutary to all conſtitutions: juſt as the ſame bread turns into one kind of fleſh in men, another in fowls, and another in fiſhes, proving nouriſhment alike to them all. Therefore to judge ſoundly of religion it is neceſſary to ſtudy human nature, and what effects may be worked thereupon by the ſeveral parts of it: but the Freethinker pronounces haſtily without cogniſance of the cauſe, for he ſtudies nothing of human nature, but proceeds altogether upon an abſtract nature of things; a meer cant phraſe, of which he has no clearer conception than the loweſt vulgar have of their myſteries, and would be as much at a loſs to give a ſteady intelligible explanation.

Then for the other part of his ſubject, Religion, he takes his idea of that from the nurſe and the prieſt, whom he affects to hold in ſuch ſovereign contempt: for he apprehends it to contain nothing more than the firſt rudiments imbibed from them. But he might reflect that perhaps his nurſe, or ſome other old woman firſt taught him to read, yet he would not now take his eſtimation of our language from the ſpelling and pronunciation of the old woman: and the prieſt who taught him his accidence, might not be the moſt enlightened of his order; or if he were ever ſo knowing, could convey no more than a child was capable of receiving. Who as ſoon as he began to think himſelf

himſelf a man, which was probably before he left ſchool, reſolved to regard no more what was ſaid to him by prieſts upon the ſubject, ſo could learn nothing more from them.

But it ſhould be remembered that as in ſome ſciences there is an exoteric and eſoteric doctrine, both many times couched under the ſame language and the ſame figures, the latter not capable of being conveyed compleatly by all the teaching in the world without honeſt and careful application in the recipient to digeſt it well for himſelf: So in the ſcience before us, we are told there is a killing letter and a quickening ſpirit, which may be relative; for a popular ſyſtem, deſigned for every body's uſe, cannot be expected in all its parts, equally to ſuit every body's digeſtion; ſo that the literal ſenſe, which is poiſonous to one man, may prove wholeſome to another, and the ſpiritual, which is vivifying to one, may ſeem as dry and taſteleſs chaff to the other. Therefore it becomes every one, who thinks himſelf a profound reaſoner, to ſearch fairly for what rational conſtruction things are ſuſceptible of, and to whoſe rational uſes they are applicable, before he pretends to decide upon the merits of them: if any thing herein before ſuggeſted in this and the preceding Chapters ſhall afford hints to help forward ſuch an enquiry, I ſhall eſteem it the luckieſt thing I could have wiſhed.

CHAP. XXIII.

Sacraments.

THERE has lately been ſome difference among doctors concerning the nature and efficacy of theſe ſacred rites, wherein I am ſo far from intending to take part on either ſide, that I have not ſo much as made myſelf well acquainted with the ſtate of the controverſy: therefore if what is here offered ſhall prove favourable or diſpleaſing to the litigants, it will be purely accidental, nor will any of them have cauſe either to thank or be wrathful with me for intermeddling. For I ſhall ſtill, as heretofore, proceed quietly my own way, without the ſpirit of oppoſition, or partially collecting whatever occurring to my thoughts may appear pertinent to the ſubject upon the beſt exerciſe of my judgment. The province I have profeſſed to undertake is that of human reaſon, by which muſt be meant my own reaſon: for ſo every man who talks of reaſon ought to be underſtood if he ſpeaks ſincerely, becauſe he cannot have juriſdiction in any province further than the ſcanty limits of his own underſtanding.

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Being apprized of this I ſhall not preſume to dictate nor demonſtrate nor venture to ſay, which laſt is the modern phraſe for the moſt confident aſſertion, nor even wiſh any body to adopt a ſentiment of mine until he finds it agreeable to his own judgment: for were the thing I ſuggeſt ever ſo right, yet if he does not ſee the juſtneſs of it with his own eyes, he will not apprehend it rightly, and it will do him no good. And if I chance to fall into miſtakes introductive of miſchiefs I do not foreſee, for others I ſhall be very careful to guard againſt, there are not wanting able champions enow to prevent their taking effect by giving warning to the unwary. But reaſon being my province, it is obvious I have nothing to do with the evidences proving thoſe rites to be of divine inſtitution, which cannot be fetched from the ſtorehouſe of human reaſon: therefore taking ſuch inſtitution for granted, I ſhall make it my buſineſs to conſider what rational idea can be entertained of them, their deſign and effects, preſuming that if ſuch can be found, it is the genuine and true one.

Now in order to know how our Church expreſſes herſelf on them, we need only have recourſe to the Catechiſm, which we have all learned, and perhaps moſt of us forgotten again, yet we may preſently borrow a book to refreſh our memory: wherein we ſhall find a ſacrament defined to be an outward and viſible ſign

of an inward and ſpiritual grace given to us, ordained by Chriſt himſelf, as a means whereby we receive the ſame, and a pledge to aſſure us thereof. Now a ſign we know is ordinarily an indication only of ſomething happening: when the weather glaſs falls we think it a ſign it will rain; when on looking through the window, we ſee the women pulling their handkerchiefs over their heads, we take this for a ſign that it is beginning to rain: but neither the mercury nor the handkerchiefs can have any influence upon the clouds to bring down their contents, being declarative only, not productive, of an event befallen or to befall. But there are other ſigns, which are not diſcoveries of ſomething unknown, but admonitions of ſomething ſlipt out of mind: as when you make ſigns with your finger to a perſon who through meer inconſiderateneſs is going to blurt out a ſecret he knows well enough to be one.

The ſacramental ſigns I apprehend are of the latter ſort: as ſigns they are not efficient cauſes of any external event that may concern us, and as monitory ſigns they are not declarations of any operation performed upon us: but being ordained by Chriſt himſelf, the ſight of them ſolemnly adminiſtered ſerves naturally to impreſs a ſtrong remembrance of him, and remind us of the ineſtimable benefits received by his procurement. Hence follows that there is nothing conjured down into the elements on conſecration,

ſecration, nor have they any quality, power or property, different from other elements employed in common uſes; and the prieſt, agreeable to his title of miniſter, acts miniſterially, not authoritatively, herein, declaring or expreſſing a former act of Chriſt, not performing an act of his own: neither can we expect to receive any other benefit from them, than what effect the ſight and the ceremony may work upon the heart and imagination.

And the term pledge may lead us into the like train, for though we often uſe the word for an earneſt given to bind a bargain, or a depoſit left in pawn for performance of an engagement, yet, it is likewiſe employed by perſons, who, intending conſiderable favours to another, but being apprehenſive he may doubt of their ſincerity or remembrance, give him ſome little thing in hand as a pledge of their kindneſs, and to ſatisfy him they will keep their word: to which latter ſenſe the expreſſion of our Church directs us by calling it a pledge, not to ſecure, but to aſſure us thereof. In like manner when God is ſaid to bind himſelf by an Oath, it is in reality no ſecurity, for if he were diſpoſed to break it, we could not help ourſelves as a man might who receives an earneſt or depoſit, but a certain aſſurance leaving no room for doubt.

Now aſſurance is a ſtate of the mind, which it may be caſt into by ſenſible objects, working a lively

lively and vigorous perſuaſion of what we know in our judgment well enough before, but had a very faint ſenſe of in the imagination: therefore the Sacraments are not evidences to convince, nor conveyances to put us into poſſeſſion of any thing promiſed, but methods for turning conviction into perſuaſion, which in the Chapter on Faith has been ſhown neceſſary to make it a virtue. For being ordained by Chriſt himſelf, and adminiſtered according to his inſtitution, they are viſible tranſactions between him and us, as direct and immediate as can be ſince his departure from earth; therefore proper pledges of his kindneſs to aſſure us of all theſe ineſtimable benefits we hope to gather therefrom.

2. But our Catechiſm has the words, as a means whereby we receive the ſame: is not this contrary to the nature of ſigns as juſt now deſcribed? Not at all to my thinking: nor do I apprehend that ſigns and means denote two diſtinct qualities in the Sacraments, but they become means by being ſigns: and this may appear when we conſider what it is we receive thereby, namely, Grace. It has been ſhown in the Chapter upon that article, that Grace, conſidered as an effect, is an extraordinary diſpoſition and vigour of mind to apprehend religious truths, which a ſign and a pledge, deſcribed as above, leave a natural efficacy to produce: and in this ſenſe it muſt be underſtood here, being ſpoken of as ſomething given to us,

us, not as ſomething operating upon us; for we cannot be ſaid to poſſeſs the holy Spirit as a gift, otherwiſe than figuratively by a common Metonyme of the cauſe for the effect.

Therefore we are not to imagine a ſpiritual influence infuſed into the elements, nor accompanying the ceremony, nor the holy Ghoſt more peculiarly preſent than at other times, unleſs in the manner God and Chriſt are ſaid to be peculiarly preſent where two or three are gathered together in their name, that is, ſolely by the greater clearneſs of our optics to diſcern them. I cannot conſiſtently with the doctrines of our Church deny, that the Grace comes by the power of God co-operating in his third perſona with our endeavours in the application of the means: for ſince no good thing can be done without ſuch aſſiſtance, the devout celebration of the Sacraments and grace conſequent thereupon being good things, ſuch aſſiſtance muſt have been afforded. But the Sacraments I apprehend obtain the divine aid in the ſame manner as other means of grace, tho' being the moſt ſacred of our devotions, they do it in a larger meaſure, and may be ſaid to bring down the holy Spirit as prayer is ſaid to bring down a ſupply of our wants from heaven: not that it can move God, but becauſe it moves ourſelves within the ſtream of his bleſſings, ſo they do not draw the heavenly power to ſhed his influence more copiouſly upon the heart, but

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draw the heart further into the current of his influence.

I am not ſo rigorous as to expect that perſons of all fized apprehenſions ſhould enter clearly into theſe refinements: let them believe the rites to be principal means of grace, without troubling their heads about the manner of operation: if they ſhould happen to mingle a ſpice of the marvellous, becauſe they cannot ſatisfy themſelves any other way, there will be no great harm done: but for ſuch as have ears to hear the voice of ſober reaſon, or eyes to diſcern the diſtinction, it ſeems very material they ſhould obſerve it. For when once a man begins to perſuade himſelf that he feels the very finger of God, or hears his whiſper, becauſe he feels a ſenſible impreſſion upon his mind and unuſual vigour in his powers of action, he is in imminent danger of ſliding inſenſibly into the wilds of ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm.

But tho' whenever we find a favourable alteration within us we muſt aſcribe it to divine aſſiſtance, upon the authority of Scripture interpreted by our doctors; yet as argued in the Chapter laſt cited, the touch occaſioning ſuch change may have been given hours or days or months before, at a time when we could not perceive it. For we are warranted upon the ſame authority to compare the divine effuſion to the wind, which bloweth where it liſteth; thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but knoweſt

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not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: we feel and hear the draught of air, and ſee the commotions it raiſes among the trees, but know nothing of the powers ſetting it in motion, where or how far off they lie, nor the time when they gave their impulſe.

3. To the queſtion, How many Sacraments hath Chriſt ordained in his Church, we are taught to anſwer, Two only as generally neceſſary to Salvation. One cannot preſently diſcern the force of the adverb Generally. It ſeems at firſt ſight to imply, that there are other Sacraments, neceſſary for particular perſons, tho' theſe alone be generally ſo; but this we know our Church diſavows. Perhaps if neceſſary had been uſed alone, the world might have joined with it in their thoughts the adverb Univerſally or Abſolutely; which might have given them the idea of an efficient virtue in the rites, putting us in poſſeſſion of certain privileges without which no man can be ſaved, as no man can live without eating, nor purchaſe lands in a foreign country without being naturalized there: but whatever may be thought of Baptiſm, I hope it will be allowed that a child dying under ſeven years old may be ſaved without ever having communicated of the Lord's Supper. Therefore by Generally I apprehend we are to underſtand no more than neceſſary for all ranks and conditions of people, laics as well as clergy, the poor, the low and the ignorant,

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as well as the rich, the noble, and the enlightened.

Let us next proceed to conſider in what ſenſe they are neceſſary, and I conceive them not directly but remotely ſo, that is, not immediately productive of ſalvation in themſelves, but neceſſary preliminaries conducting to ſomething elſe whereby we may attain it. Were future happineſs a gift conferred by an immediate act of God, as vulgarly conceived, there would need no preparatives to fit us for the reception: for he who was able to raiſe up Children to Abraham of the verieſt ſtones, is likewiſe able to inveſt any creature, however qualified in any ſtate or condition of Being whatever, to make a ſaint of a damned ſoul, an Angel of a Devil, by an exertion of his Omnipotence. But Religion and Philoſophy unanimouſly agree, that we are placed here in a ſtate of probation, this life being preparatory to the next: which it could not be, at leaſt to our comprehenſion, unleſs there were certain ſtated laws of univerſal Nature, rendering every man's condition hereafter dependent upon that wherein he quitted this earthly ſtage.

From whence, together with what has been argued in former places, it appears, that that neareſt approach to perfection of the ſpiritual body wherein we are to riſe again, which any man is capable of making in his preſent ſituation, is the thing directly productive of ſalvation.

tion. Which ſtate the ſpiritual body is caſt into by habitual juſt ſentiments of God, and a tenour of conduct conformable thereto, called in Scripture language coming to the Father, ſtrengthened and evidenced by the practice of right actions, ſtiled in the ſame language doing the Will of the Father. And that this coming to the Father is the ſole thing neceſſary, may be gathered from the words of Chriſt himſelf; who has declared that all the ſaying, Lord, Lord, propheſying, caſting out Devils, doing many wonderful works in his name, will avail nothing without it: nor can it well be doubted that if Adam had continued ſtedfaſt in innocence, he might have been ſaved without knowledge of Chriſt, or application of the Sacraments.

But the Goſpel has declared that no man can come to the Father unleſs through the Son: we are ſo debilitated by the original ſin or ſinfulneſs and imbecillity of our Nature evidenced by the experiment made upon Adam, that we cannot poſſibly attain that health of the ſpiritual body wherein ſalvation conſiſts, by our own ſtrength and ſagacity without aid of the precepts, the inſtitutions and example of Chriſt, which therefore are the ſole and neceſſary paſſage conducting to the Father. What other paſſages may lie open to other perſons, or whether the ſame degree of preparation in this life be requiſite for every body, I have already con-

ſidered in former places, particularly that relating to the doctrine of the ſtrait gate in the Chapter on Redemption: but to us to whom the Goſpel has been propounded in a manner convincing to our underſtanding, and to ſuch only it muſt be ſuppoſed to ſpeak becauſe ſuch only will hear it, there is none other paſſage by which we have any chance of arriving at our deſired haven.

But ſince we cannot always ſee the expedience of his rules, nor diſcern the good of that endurance and forbearance whereof he has ſet us a pattern, our attachment to them will die away by degrees without an habitual reverence and truſt in his name continually ſtimulating us thereto: for it is well known in common life, how much a name avails to bind things together in the remembrance which otherwiſe might diſſipate, and the regard to a particular perſon fixes a proportionable regard upon every thing relative to him. Now thoſe ſacred rites ordained by Chriſt himſelf, actually delivered by him to our own perſons, ſo far as can be done by repreſentation, as ſigns, pledges or tokens of his love to us, will have a natural tendency, if taken and received in that idea, to ſtrengthen our truſt in his name, and our reverence of his authority.

Thus the Sacraments are rather Chriſtian than divine ſervices, efficacious to invigorate our Faith in Chriſt, which is called the ſaving

Faith

Faith becauſe introductive of that which is directly and immediately ſo. Therefore we may preſume the Church pronounces them neceſſary, as being neceſſary equipments for our journey, rather than an actual progreſs in it: and upon having received them devoutly, we are not to look upon ourſelves as a whit more in poſſeſſion of Salvation, but better provided with the means of attaining it. For the benefit, if any, muſt appear in the improvement of our ſentiments and conduct afterwards: or to uſe the Stoical allegory, we are ſtill as much in a ſtate of drowning as before; but have laid hold on the cords, by which with hearty lifts we may raiſe ourſelves into the pure air of rectitude and holineſs.

If there be any who conceit they can do as well without them, or have found no improvement of their piety from them upon trial, it does not become us to judge of another, we muſt leave every man to his own conſcience, and his own experience upon that article: yet even admitting him right, ſtill they may be generally though not univerſally neceſſary. I cannot indeed ſuppoſe the compilers of our Catechiſm had any ſuch conſtruction in their thoughts, but the words may be true in that conſtruction; for the practice of them may be neceſſary in general to keep up a ſpirit of Chriſtianity among us, which ſpirit will diffuſe itſelf imperceptibly by ſympathy among particulars not uſing the

means appointed. Whereto muſt be owing that our modern Philoſophy has a greater mixture of Chriſtianity among it than the ancient: and I have met with profound reaſoners, ſeeming to retain very little reſpect for the name of Chriſt, who yet have more of the Chriſtian in their character than they know of, ſo have actually received a remote benefit from the Sacraments, though they will not acknowledge it.

4. Perhaps it may be alledged, that if Sacraments operate none otherwiſe than upon the mind and imagination, then Baptiſm is a meer empty form, being adminiſtered to infants, who can have no imagination of what is doing to them. But if they have not then, they will when grown up, and come to reflect on the ſolemnity wherewith they have been admitted to a participation of the benefits procured to mankind by Chriſt, and in their own perſons received the ſign and pledge of his love ordained by himſelf. It would likewiſe operate upon the by-ſtanders as a means of grace, were they careful to aſſiſt at it with a little more ſerioufneſs, and not as a mere cuſtomary form: for it would remind them of their own admiſſion by the like ceremony, and engage their charity to a new fellow traveller to whom an entrance has juſt been opened into the ſame road of ſalvation with themſelves.

Therefore

Therefore it was a very wiſe proviſion of our Church, that all Baptiſms ſhall be celebrated publicly, except upon extraordinary occaſions; and it is no leſs prudent in our preſent Clergy to adminiſter privately without aſking for your extraordinary occaſion: becauſe elſe as the world goes, there would be no baptizing at all, and I have ſaid more than once before, that a wiſe man will do as he can when he cannot do as he would. Indeed as our places of worſhip in this humid climate are ſtone vaults, many times half under ground, and our children born with more delicate conſtitutions than thoſe of our forefathers, who were a nation of ſoldiers and huntſmen, there may be a good reaſon againſt expoſing them to the damps of a quarry in winter ſeaſon: but ſince the rubric has not limited the time, why might not the ceremony be deferred till vernal Suns have exhaled the dangerous vapours and blunted the cutting edge of Eurus?

There is one obſtacle againſt this method, that the nurſes would loſe their fees, and it is well known the laws of fathion are holden more indiſpenſible among us, than thoſe of the Church: but this might be removed by the ſponſors coming early to make their offerings to the air-born Goddeſs, and at the ſame time appointing their ſubſtitutes to attend for them at the ſacred font, in caſe themſelves ſhould be engaged in the more important tranſactions of

Tunbridge, or Newmarket: whereby both our credit and our conſciences might be ſaved harmleſs at once. But though the Clergy muſt do as they can with the Laity, one ſhould think they might do as they would with their own body, and prevail on them to certify all private Baptiſms as the rubric directs, for which it might not be amiſs if a ſhort prayer were framed ſuitable thereto. From what has been ſaid it appears matter of conſequence to a grown perſon, but not to a child dying young, whether it has ever been chriſtened or no: nevertheleſs I am for a ſpeedy adminiſtration in caſes where life is in danger, were it for none other reaſon than a little to open the narrow minds of the vulgar, by advancing one ſtep towards the idea of a general intereſt, and making it received as a popular doctrine, that a ſoul may be ſaved without actual faith in Chriſt, or knowledge of him during its abode in this earthly tabernacle.

5. There are folks who pretend to be mightily ſhocked at the abſurdity of a child promiſing by proxies not appointed by himſelf, which promiſe ſays our Church, when come to years of diſcretion, himſelf is bound to perform: but I hope none are ſtricken with this ſhock who hold the Revolution principles, and ground the liberties of this nation upon an original contract made between the kings and people of our Saxon anceſtors; nor any of the French

French writers, who lay down that if the reigning family ſhould ever happen to be extinct, the Eſtates would have a right to chooſe whomſoever they pleaſed, but are bound to the preſent family by the choice made by their anceſtors of Hugh Capet.

In theſe caſes there is an obligation, not otherwiſe binding, laid upon children born or to be born throughout all ſucceeding generations, which there is not in the principal caſe, where the child enters into no new engagement, nor gives up any natural right belonging to him: for let us conſider what it is he promiſes, To renounce the world, the fleſh and the devil, which tranſlated into philoſophic language is vanity, indulgence and malice; to believe the articles of the Chriſtian Faith: and to keep God's holy will and commandments. The firſt and laſt of theſe three branches the child is already bound to by the condition of that nature whereinto he is born, under a peril of forfeiting all his hopes in futurity: and it being the doctrine of our Church, that in this lapſed ſtate none can ſufficiently fulfil thoſe obligations without aid of the Chriſtian doctrines and inſtitutions, he is by the ſame condition of his nature likewiſe bound to the ſecond branch, as a neceſſary paſſage introductive into the other two. So here is no engagement made for the child by his Godfathers, nor promiſe of any thing he would not, when come to age, himſelf have

been bound to perform, though they had undertaken nothing for him: and their part in the ceremony amounts to no more, than a declaration made with a ſolemnity proper to ſtrike a ſtrong ſenſe upon the mind of an obligation lying upon the child, and upon us all, by the proviſions of God and nature, upon our being formed human creatures.

If it might be permitted to offer one little alteration, I would propoſe that the word Doſt in the ſecond interrogatory, might be changed into Wilt: for there does ſeem to be ſome handle for ſcoffers to be arch upon making a new born babe actually believe a ſet of articles, when he can have no idea of a ſingle term among all thoſe wherein they are couched. I preſume it was this miſtake of looking upon Baptiſm as the actual agreement to a contract not ſubſiſting before, rather than the declaration of one whereto we are obligated at our birth by the neceſſity of our nature, that made the Anabaptiſts ſcrupulous of adminiſtering it, unleſs to adults: for taking it in that light, there ſeems to be a foundation for their ſcruples. However if any body thinks himſelf not ſufficiently obligated, nor conſequently entitled to the privileges of a contracting party, without an act of his own, the Church has provided the ceremony of confirmation, by which he may take upon himſelf all that his ſponſors undertook in his name, and then he may be ſatisfied upon the

the maxims whereby we govern ourſelves in our temporal concerns: for I think it is a rule of law, that if an infant, after he comes of age, aſſents to a deed executed by him in his minority, it becomes as good and valid as if he had been forty Years old at the original time of ſealing.

But there might be many inconveniences in delaying the celebration until children were grown up: I have obſerved before, that it is notorious how apt people are to put off a thing for which there is not a fixed time wherein it muſt be done. Some would never think themſelves ſufficiently inſtructed to qualify them for the undertaking. Some would delay it on purpoſe that they might not double the guilt of complying with the world, the fleſh and the devil, by a ſolemn renunciation. Some would be cruelly tortured by the dilemma of precipitating the ſacred rite before they were well prepared, or elſe running the hazard of being cut off by a ſudden death while delaying longer than they ought. Multitudes would omit it through careleſſneſs, ſo that we ſhould never know who were even nominal Chriſtians among us, and who are not. Beſides, as a great deal of wickedneſs may be committed before ſeventeen, which I think is reckoned the adult age, many ſprightly young people would imagine they had a licence to do as they pleaſed, preſuming

ſuming upon the laver of regeneration for waſhing away all former ſcores.

For this notion is apt to ariſe from the rite employed, water being ſerviceable to waſh away foulneſſes remaining from prior defilements: but there is no more fruitful ſource of errors in Religion, than the too rigorous interpretation of figures, by applying all the properties and operations of the image to the thing ſignified thereby. But I apprehend the effects of Baptiſm, though ſimilar are not the ſame with thoſe of water, having reſpect to the future rather than the paſt, working a deliverance from condemnation none otherwiſe than by the prevention of ſin: the original, or other ſin waſhed away thereby, being not an actual guilt, but a ſinfulneſs or depravity of nature, which the inward and ſpiritual grace, given to us by means of this outward ſign, removes by helping to produce a thorough repentance or Metanoia, that is, a change of mind from a carnal or ſenſual habit to a ſpiritual or rational.

6. The like application of the properties in the ſign to the thing ſignified, together with a fondneſs for the marvellous, has proved the ſource of many dangerous errors, and fatal diſſenſions concerning the Euchariſt; by which thouſands have been vexed, ruined, perſecuted, tortured and murdered, and the prince of peace made the authoriſer of havoc, deſolation and carnage. For the reception of this Sacrament being

being termed eating the fleſh of Chriſt, the properties of fleſh muſt needs be annexed to the bread: and becauſe this fleſh is ſuppoſed to contain peculiar qualities not belonging to other fleſh, it is neceſſary the prieſt ſhould call down his very body crucified upon the croſs into the bread; which muſt be tranſubſtantiated thereinto, or conſubſtantiated therewith, ſo that Chriſt himſelf may be really and corporally preſent in the elements. It would become thoſe who pretend to ſtickle ſo ſtrenuouſly for the letter, to recollect that text which teaches, that the letter killeth, but the ſpirit maketh alive; and indeed this letter has killed its thouſands.

But let us obſerve how well they do adhere to the letter in the form of the inſtitution, comparing the Evangeliſts with Saint Paul's account of it to the Corinthians: Chriſt ſays, This is my body which is broken, This is my blood which is ſhed; the prieſt ſays, This is his body which is whole, entire and unbroken, containing the maſs of blood unſhed within it. Chriſt ſays, Drink ye all of this: the prieſt ſays, will drink this myſelf; ſo there is none to be had for the communicant. Oh! but all things are poſſible with God; he who could make the ſame body exiſt in a thouſand places at once, can make the ſame maſs of blood exiſt at once unſhed in the wafer, and ſhed in the cup; ſo that the lay communicant has already had the blood

blood together with the body. Very well, but then he has eaten, not drank it; neither, ſince here are two ſame bloods, has he had that which was ſhed: both which particulars were ordained in the letter of the inſtitution.

But theſe abſurdities are now pretty well gotten rid of, I believe among the thoughtful in all countries, but certainly among the generality in our own: yet I am afraid the expreſſions employed in the Catechiſm leave a notion in ſome people of ſomething divine infuſed into the elements, from thence entering into the ſubſtance of the Soul, which is nouriſhed thereby, as our bodies are by the bread and wine. But they may pleaſe to remember, the Church declares them an outward and viſible ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace. But the reception of grace is not an acceſſion or alteration of ſubſtance, no more than the acquiſition of a new virtue, a language, a ſcience or accompliſhment, which are only habits of the mind; and a ſign is the ſame to the ſenſes, as a figure to the underſtanding.

The Scripture abounds in figures, oftentimes of that kind called by the writers on rhetoric, Enigmas or riddles, on purpoſe to ſet us upon a diligent exerciſe of our judgement, without which hearing we ſhall hear and not underſtand, and ſeeing we ſhall ſee but not perceive. The Jews had many far-fetched figures current among them, which ſeem uncouth and myſte-

rious

rious to us: but this was too dark even for them, for they boggled at it, ſaying, How can this man give us his fleſh to eat? Yet it is not more harſh than that uſed with the Samaritan woman, to whom Jeſus declared that the drink he ſhould give would prove a fountain of living waters in the belly: but it would ſound very ſtrange in our ears to talk of a man's carrying a fountain about with him in his belly. Therefore in the interpretation of figures, how remote ſoever the alluſion lies, we muſt purſue it on till we find it terminate in ſomething conſiſtent with common ſenſe, reaſon, and human nature.

Nor need we want a clue to lead us among the alluſions frequently drawn from eating, and things relative thereto, as well in our familiar as ſerious diſcourſes: mothers ſay, they love their children ſo well they could eat them; miſchief is ſaid to be nuts to ſome folks; we talk of a thirſt of knowledge, a glutton of books, cramming down divinity, of digeſting what we read, of a meagre and ſtarveling ſtile, of crudities in expreſſions: of the marrow, nerves and ſinews, to which Tully adds, the blood and complexion of a diſcourſe, of feeding the thoughts on a ſubject, feaſting them on a pleaſurable reflection, receiving the cordial of comfort, imbibing opinions, ſwallowing the tenets of a party or particular perſon; and many more figures of the like ſort, taken from the

the ſame fund. Now it is not unlikely, the Jews might carry their alluſion a little further remote, and where we ſhould expreſs ourſelves by ſwallowing the doctrines, they might talk of eating the man himſelf.

And that the deglutition was of this ſort appears manifeſt, becauſe our Church, and I believe all Churches, holds that Chriſt is eaten effectually, ſo as to prove nouriſhment, by none but the faithful: but the faith here ſpoken of, operates only during the celebration, therefore the nouriſhment we receive is taken in then, not after the elements are down in our ſtomachs. Yet our Church, although diſavowing the corporal, maintains the real preſence of the body and blood of Chriſt; which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's ſupper. Which reſtriction to the faithful ſhows, what kind of body is really preſent, namely, that which is diſcernible only by the eye of faith, not by any of the bodily ſenſes: for whatever body and blood, and whatever ſupernatural virtue or nutritive faculty, the prieſt has infuſed into the bread, are verily and indeed taken and received by the unfaithful. So that the real preſence here is the ſame with that of God in places where two or three are gathered together in his name: if there be a man among them, who did not gather in his name, who looks upon the Church ſervices as an idle inſignificant parade, but muſt come

come to qualify himſelf for a place upon the teſt act; to him God is no more preſent at the communion table, than the gaming table, notwithſtanding that he remarks, and will in proper time remember, his behaviour at both places.

It was neceſſary to be expreſs concerning the real preſence, becauſe elſe a handle might have been taken for apprehending the ceremony a meer form which might be complied with or let alone, an imaginary tranſaction without any real effect. And the verily and indeed taking of what before was called an inward and ſpiritual grace, muſt denote that the devout communicant does actually receive the benefits underſtood in the Goſpel by the figure of eating the fleſh, and drinking the blood of Chriſt, that is, the confirming our truſt and faith in his name, the quickening our remembrance of all he has done and ſuffered for us: which will naturally help to ſtrengthen our diſpoſition to virtuous and good actions, refreſh our languid hopes in the adminiſtration of Providence, and rekindle our cooling Charity towards our fellow creatures.

7. If we conſider what it is the Church requires of them who come to the Lord's ſupper, we ſhall find it to be nothing more than to examine themſelves, whether they already poſſeſs in ſome meaſure the very things they expect to receive more compleatly by coming thither:

thither: ſo that the ſacred rite infuſes no new grace or virtue into us, but gives us a powerful lift in the progreſs we had begun before. Therefore the right preparation for this Sacrament is made by calling over in our ſerious thoughts whatever diſpoſitions of mind, and courſes of practice may prove moſt beneficial to our ſpiritual intereſt, and ſummoning up a hearty reſolution to purſue them: we ſhall be able to do this very imperfectly, but if we exert our endeavours, not in a fright and a flurry, but with a calm ſteady determination, we ſhall find ourſelves ſtrongly aſſiſted therein by the viſible ſigns and pledges ordained by Chriſt himſelf, and ſo far as repreſentation can go, delivered by Chriſt himſelf to us in our own perſons.

One of the requiſites mentioned being repentance of former ſins, ſome good women hold it neceſſary to afflict and humble themſelves for a week beforehand by way of preparation: I have ſhown in the laſt Chapter, that humiliation and a thorough ſcrutiny into our failings may be performed without making it a melancholy taſk. It is like the work of a country, upon whom ſome calamity has befallen, preparing a liſt of their diſtreſſes to lay before the prince for relief; which I ſuppoſe they would go about with alacrity, and yet with exactneſs. However if any have ſuch a conſtitution of mind, as that they cannot bring themſelves to hearty repentance without a great

great deal of ſighing and groaning, I have nothing to ſay againſt it: only let them throw aſide their ſorrows when they approach the ſacred table, for they are to bring thither a lively ſenſe of God's mercies, with a thankful remembrance of their Redemption; but the voice of thankſgiving is the voice of joy, and melancholy is utterly incompatible with livelineſs. We are told indeed that upon ſome occaſions the moſt acceptable prayer is, God be merciful to me a ſinner, which carries an air of dejection and diſtreſs: but for a Euchariſt, which by the very name requires a chearful and hopeful ſpirit, it will be a more ſuitable ejaculation, to ſay, Aſſuredly, O God, thou wilt be merciful to me a ſinner.

There are thoſe of ſcrupulous conſciences, who terrify themſelves ſtrangely at the danger of receiving unworthily, warned againſt in the eleventh of the firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians. I would recommend to ſuch, to read over Mr Locke's paraphraſe and notes upon that paſſage; where they will find it relates wholly to a perverſe cuſtom, crept in amongſt the Corinthians, of each man bringing his own dinner with him to Church: the rich gormandized upon their dainties without ſuffering the poor toads, who had nothing to bring but a few crumbs of bread and cheeſe, to partake with them. But there being no ſuch cuſtom thought

thought of now, we cannot run a hazard of the judgements there denounced by Saint Paul.

And the manner wherein he directed, and this Sacrament is conſtantly adminiſtred among us, may convince us of the intrinſic equality among mankind: for bread from the ſame loaf, and wine from the ſame cup are diſtributed, the ſame ſpiritual nouriſhment afforded, the ſame ſigns and pledges of love delivered in repreſentation by Chriſt himſelf, to all, without diſtinction of noble and honourable, rich and mighty, learned and ſagacious, reverend and ſecular; but the poor, the ſimple and the ignorant, are admitted to the ſame meſs at the Lord's table, the ſame hopes and the ſame promiſes: ſo that though our conditions in this life are very various in all reſpects, yet the ſpirits of men are by nature homogeneous and ſimilar, without other difference than what they make themſelves by their reſpective manner of conduct.

But the expreſſion which gives the greateſt diſturbance is that of not diſcerning the Lord's body, which though Mr Locke has ſhown ought to have been tranſlated in another manner, and ſo this text has no relation to the matter cauſing this diſturbance, yet it is apparent from the nature of the thing, as explained above, that ſuch diſcernment is the act whereby the body and blood of Chriſt are verily and indeed taken and received: therefore more or leſs

leſs ſpiritual nouriſhment is taken in, and the Sacrament more or leſs worthily received, in proportion to the ſtrength or faintneſs of the diſcernment.

Yet the damage is barely negative, the non-diſcernment, if owing to inability, being not a wickedneſs committed, but only a loſs of advantage that might have accrued: ſo that if any with all their efforts cannot raiſe ſo full a diſcernment as they wiſh, or as others do, or as they have done themſelves at other times, they need not affright themſelves upon that account; for ſhould they not diſcern at all, they would not be the worſe, but only never the better than if they had forborn to communicate. Nevertheleſs it is dangerous thus to receive unworthily, or approach when under an utter indiſpoſition of mind to diſcern the Lord's body; leſt it ſhould grow into a habit, whereby they will be utterly debarred the benefits intended to be conveyed by this ſacred rite.

CHAP. XXIV.

Diſcipline.

MATTERS of Diſcipline belong to Eccleſiaſtical polity, a different ſcience from thoſe of Religion or Philoſophy, as reſpecting rather the outward forms and rules of behaviour in ſociety, than the inward ſentiments or manners: it takes in the conſideration, of what is practicable and ſuitable together with what is right in theory, and builds as much upon knowledge of the world, as upon that nature of things which is the object of contemplation in the elect. Yet reaſon upon obſervation of that nature of things, may diſcern, that ſome rule and diſcipline in religious matters is neceſſary for order and convenience ſake: for a certain portion of our time having been appointed to be kept holy by divine command, ſacred rites having been ordained by Chriſt himſelf, public aſſemblies, places of worſhip, proviſions to be made therein, perſons to officiate thereat, having in the foregoing Chapters been ſhown inſtrumental to the ſubſtantials of Religion; all theſe things could not be commodiouſly ſupplied without eſtabliſhed regulations prevailing among a religious community.

It may be fancied, the people might fall into ſuch regulations of themſelves upon view of their expedience, without aid of authority to interfere: which in this caſe being human authority, will always be liable to error, and in fact has proved more miſchievous than ſerviceable to Religion in former times. I ſhall not deny that grievous and crying abuſes have been committed, and ſo there have in ſecular government under all its forms, whether democratical, oligarchic or monarchical: but will any man therefore wiſh to live in anarchy, among a people who had none other guide than their own diſcernment of what meaſures were requiſite for their general ſecurity and well-being?

A few friends of reaſonable tempers and ſimilar characters might live together well enough, without other law than their own diſcretion: for they would agree in the ſame judgment upon moſt occaſions, and where they did not, would quickly be brought over into one anothers ſentiments. So a young ſect in its beginning may ſubſiſt and grow, without aid of authority: for being few in number, they will be friends to one another, will all have the ſame ſcheme at heart, which conſiſts of two or three particulars whereon they perpetually conſer, with a real deſire of mutual agreement in their common ſupport. And yet though I have admitted this poſſible in theory, I

ſhould be puzzled to produce an inſtance of it in fact: for there has always been ſome particular perſon of high repute among his brethren for extraordinary ſanctity and knowledge in ſpiritual matters, whoſe deciſion is ſacred, and whoſe word is a law to all the reſt. Our modern innovators exhibit ſtrong ſpecimens of the force of ſuch a prepoſſeſſion, upon which they wholly depend for cementing their flock together: for they pronounce upon every thing with the peremptorineſs of an abſolute monarch; and I have been informed that one of them in particular, if any body ſcruples doing as he bids, never ſtands to reaſon the caſe, but tells him with a confident air, You will be damned if you do not. This was all the Pope ever had to ſay: yet we know too well what a mighty influence this little terrifying word gave him over kings, and ſtates, and all temporal affairs.

But whatever may be done among a ſociety of friends or in the infancy of a ſyſtem, when it once is ſpread among multitudes, or become national, there muſt be ſome public regulations for keeping things from running into diſorder: for the members being numerous, ſtrangers to one another, diſperſed in different places, of different humours and turns of thought, there would be a thouſand various modes of diſcipline among them: which being ſeldom diſtinguiſhable from eſſentials by the generality they

they would become a diſjointed body, perpetually at variance, or at leaſt incapable of that benefit they might receive from their mutual intercourſe. Beſides that proviſion is to be made not only for convenience of ſuch as are well diſpoſed, but likewiſe for inſtructing the ignorant, for engaging the thoughtleſs, for preventing thoſe who will do no good from doing hurt, and reſtraining the licentious within ſome bounds of decency.

For when we reflect on the force of appearance and ſympathy, we muſt acknowledge that every man's outward behaviour may be of conſequence to others, where it is of none to himſelf: and though hypocriſy may prove as pernicious to the owner as blaſphemy, yet it is much more innocent to the public. Therefore we ſee that in all countries upon earth that have any Religion among them, there is ſome eſtabliſhed diſcipline: and though the wiſeſt and moſt rationally religious of them tolerate other forms than their own, they have their inſtitutions and uſages for the generality, and for ſuch as have none opinions and but little thought of their own. And even the tolerated ſyſtems of any conſiderable currency, though not ſupported by law, have their forms, their cuſtoms and their diſcipline enforced by the authority of ſome kind of conſiſtories amongſt them.

In making proviſion for the purpoſes above-mentioned, regard muſt be had to the temper and character of the people, to their former perſuaſions and cuſtoms, to the civil conſtitutions of the nation, and to the ſentiments of neighbouring nations; that as little of peculiarity and oppoſition may appear, as poſſible. All which being out of my ſphere, it would not become me to pronounce upon the perfection of any ritual: therefore ſhall preſume of our eccleſiaſtical polity, as ought to be preſumed of our civil, and indeed of every private man's behaviour, that it is right until apparent reaſons occur to the contrary, and until ſtanding in a ſituation to have full cogniſance of the cauſe with all its circumſtances and dependences. Therefore I ſhall only make obſervation upon one or two particulars, in hopes to explain their uſe and tendency to ſuch as may have miſapprehended them.

2. When I was at the Univerſity I remember to have heard the young fellows, intending for holy orders, deſcant upon the call they muſt profeſs themſelves to have, before they could obtain ordination. They ſeemed in general to look upon it as a remnant of the Romiſh ſuperſtition, and that our firſt Reformers underſtood by it a ſecret intimation or impulſe of the Holy Spirit, urging them to the ſacred function. Thoſe of a more ſerious turn, yet too rational to pretend to methodiſtical experiences, wiſhed they

they could be excuſed the queſtion, as knowing of no ſuch impulſe they ever had, which might entitle them to anſwer in the affirmative. Others regarding it as an antiquated form, which had no real meaning, but to which for decency ſake they muſt give ſome meaning, thought a nominal appointment to ſome paltry Curacy or Chaplainſhip a ſufficient call within the words of the inſtitution. And thus it ever happens, that when things are not preſently comprehended, there ariſes an idea of ſomething ſupernatural: but there are ſo many unaccountable things in the operations of Nature, in the workings of chance, ſo many myſteries in all arts and ſciences, as one would think might cure us of the humour of making Myſterious a ſynonymous term with Miraculous.

I have laid down in the firſt ſection of the Chapter on the Trinity, though without any thought of having a uſe for the obſervation here, that the delivery of the talent is the proper call to whatever work may be compleated thereby: for God calls us by the voice of nature, by the ſituation and circumſtances wherein his Providence has placed us. He has made us ſociable creatures, capable of giving help, or doing damage to one another: by this he calls upon us to contribute our part towards every general intereſt wherein we can be ſerviceable. He has likewiſe diſtributed to us various talents, temperaments, externals and opportunities:

by which he calls to that particular ſcheme of life for which they are moſt ſuitable, and which will be moſt beneficial to ourſelves, and others with whom we have connection. And that I am not ſingular in this conſtruction, appears from the appellation given to all common trades and profeſſions, which are termed lawful callings, that is, employments whereto each particular man is called by the courſes of nature and fortune, thoſe two miniſters of Providence, for making his own life eaſy, and ſupplying conveniences for the public.

This laſt effect is not had in contemplation by perſons entering into common occupations: the ſhoemaker follows his calling to get a livelihood thereby, and has no further thought of obliging his cuſtomers than that it may bring them to his ſhop again; ſo the benefit accruing to the public from his labours is purely accidental with reſpect to him. But the Church, I preſume, judged it requiſite, that thoſe who undertake the profeſſion of inſtructing others in the relation they ſtand in to their Maker, and their obligation to purſue a general intereſt, ſhould firſt be ſenſible of the like themſelves: and ſhould look upon their profeſſion, not ſolely as a livelihood or temporal advancement, but likewiſe in the light of a calling, as the courſe of life wherein they can moſt effectually perform the Will of God by being moſt ſerviceable to their fellow creatures, and beſt con-

contributing their part towards the general intereſt.

Therefore I cannot think this demand of a call an inſignificant or uſeleſs ceremony, as it would be to a ſhoemaker before he were permitted to ſet up his trade. For the ſhoemaker, if he have a due regard to his private intereſt, will upon that motive make the ſtrongeſt and neateſt ſhoes in his ſkill and power; nor could he do better if he had the public accommodation ever ſo ſtrongly at heart. But the office of a Clergyman may be performed in very different manners; either perfunctorily, as a taſk neceſſary for entitling him to receive his tithes or his ſtipend, and to eſcape the cenſure of the world, or carefully and conſcientiouſly, as a truſt repoſed in him by God, for the maintenance of Religion and benefit of the flock committed to his care: which laſt manner he will not be likely to purſue, without a full ſenſe of its being a calling in the conſtruction offered above.

Upon this view of the matter I may be allowed to ſuppoſe the Church expects that a young man, before he determines upon the miniſtry, ſhould make a ſerious and thorough examination of his talents, his education, his taſte and diſpoſition of mind, and his ſituation in life: and thereupon ſhould ſtand perſuaded, that he is called to this function by God, not in his third Perſon of diſpenſer of Grace and giver

giver of ſupernatural aſſiſtance, but in his Perſon of Father, the Author of Nature, ordainer of Providence and diſpoſer of all events; as being the way wherein he is likely to ſerve God and mankind to beſt purpoſe. I ſhould imagine any man might go through this ſcrutiny, ſo as to ſatisfy himſelf whether he has ſuch call, or no; and if upon the reſult he ſincerely thinks he has, may rationally and honeſtly anſwer to the queſtion propoſed.

As for the appointment to ſome certain duty, there may be other good reaſons for requiring it, but I apprehend it not at all neceſſary to warrant his profeſſion of having a call. For as the ſhoemaker, when out of his apprenticeſhip, and expert in the trade, may ſet up his lawful calling though he has not a ſingle pair of ſhoes beſpoken of him; becauſe he may provide all his implements and materials to ſupply any who ſhall be willing to ſet him at work, and may prepare ſhoes to lie ready made for ſuch cuſtomers as are nice in their meaſure: ſo I apprehend the young divine may be ſaid in part to anſwer his call, by putting himſelf in a readineſs to enter directly upon any work that may offer; and as expertneſs comes by practice, he may better qualify himſelf to act as a maſter, by doing journey-work in the interim.

But there is a ſcruple apt to ſtart up in ſome ſerious minds from a ſecret vanity, which will inſinuate itſelf into every man, in ſome ſhape or other,

other, in ſpite of his utmoſt endeavours to keep it out. We all fancy ourſelves of prodigious importance; if we have a notion of doing ſervice to the public, it muſt needs be great ſervice or it is nothing; hence ſome well-diſpoſed perſons being conſcious they are not qualified to convert infidels, to ſilence gainſayers, to enlighten the ignorant, to ſoften the reprobate, are doubtful whether they have a call. But all are not to be Apoſtles, nor Tillotſons nor Barrows. The Church militant, as well as the army, requires officers of all ranks; without ſubalterns more numerous than the field officers, neither can be compleat: and in this, as in all other profeſſions, every man does well, who does his beſt, be it ever ſo little. Without this conſideration I could have no encouragement to go on with my Chapters, as expecting no mighty matters from them: but if I, circumſtanced in all reſpects as I am, could not have employed my time better any other way, I am juſtified; and ſo is every man who beſtows his pains in any work upon a conſiderate opinion, that he could not have beſtowed them to greater advantage elſewhere.

Therefore I conceive the call is not to be looked for in the abſolute quantity of good to be done by a particular perſon in the miniſtry, but in the greater comparative good he may hope to do, all circumſtances conſidered, in that profeſſion, than any he could turn himſelf to

to beſide: and if he have a reaſonable proſpect of ſuch greater good, he is juſtified in aſſenting to the interrogatory. If there be any among the Clergy who might have ſerved their country better as intriguing ſtateſmen, compliant courtiers, intrepid ſoldiers, buſy traders, ingenious artificers, diſputatious lawyers, or ſturdy plowmen, I leave them to their own conſciences, having nothing to ſuggeſt for aſſiſting them in their juſtification. Nevertheleſs I am not ſo meerly ſpeculative as to inſiſt that no temporal conſiderations nor direction of parents ought to weigh in the ſcale, being ſenſible this neither is practicable, nor would be convenient for the public ſervice: therefore I ſaid all circumſtances conſidered, for our ſituation in life and the authority of ſuperiors are of the proviſion of Heaven and conſequently deſerve to be taken into account as parts of the call, which ought all to be regarded as they may explain and qualify one another. But if all things have not been duly weighed, or if upon the reſult it ſtill remains viſible, that better ſervice might be done in ſome other courſe of life, it ſeems a direct prevarication to pretend a call.

3. Another ſource of debate ſprung from the words Receive the Holy Ghoſt, which were thought to imply an actual delivery of ſomething: for being in the imperative mood, like the Recipe of a phyſician, and accompanied with a ſolemn act, they ſeemed to expreſs

preſs a direction to the party to take what was adminiſtered to him by ſuch act, and to carry the idea of a certain efficacy tranſpiring from the fingers of the Biſhop upon impoſition of hands, which might invigorate the faculties, and infuſe powers wanting before. But there are innumerable inſtances in diſcourſes of all kinds, where the imperative mood is uſed without any ſuch meaning. When Saint Paul began his epiſtles, or a preacher concludes his ſermon, with ſaying, The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be among you all; when we ſay God grant or God ſend; when on parting company we bid one another Good by, which is an abbreviation of God be with you, we have no thought of any thing delivered, or of giving directions to receive it: it is no more than a petition or cordial wiſh, that the thing may happen as we expreſs. So the expreſſion may be underſtood as if it had run, May you receive that aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit without which no good thing, more eſpecially not this ſacred office, can be performed effectually.

But the words being conſtrued as a prayer or wiſh, does not make it neceſſary they muſt have no real effect beſide: for the whole ſolemnity of which this formula is a part, may ſtill operate as a natural means of what is here called the Holy Ghoſt, by a very uſual Metonyme of the cauſe for the effect. We have ſeen in the two laſt Chapters, that forms, cere-

ceremonies and ſenſible objects have an efficacy to ſtrike impreſſions upon the mind; and produce there that diſpoſition and vigour of ſentiment which in religious matters is termed Grace. In the commerce of the world, when a man enters upon a new courſe of life, he conſiders himſelf in a new character, aſſumes different ſentiments and forms, a new plan of conduct ſuitable thereto: the change of character muſt be compleated by degrees, but if there be ſome ſolemn act or ceremony accompanying, it will at once give a ſtrong turn to his thoughts, and ſerve as the leading idea of an aſſociation continually introducing the others, connected in train therewith, to his remembrance. For this reaſon the entrance upon moſt offices is opened with a formal inveſtiture, from the crowning of the king down to the delivery of the ſtaff to a conſtable: which tho' intended likewiſe as a notification to the public of the quality and authority of the perſon, yet by that very circumſtance will have an additional effect upon him, when he reflects in what light he will be conſidered by others.

In like manner I apprehend the ſolemnity of inveſtiture in the ſacred function of one who conſiders it as the work whereto he is called of God in the ſenſe a little before explained, and reflects that from thenceforward he will be regarded in a new character by the world, may produce in him a conſiderable Metanoia, a new

turn

turn of mind, a change of ſentiments, aims and ſchemes, with a calm and ſteady but ſtrong determination to conform his whole future conduct thereto: and thus without magic or miracle, but by natural means, may actually convey what is figuratively called the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe without his ſecret concurrence the conveyance will not be compleat, nor the effect of it durable. But the word Receive implies ſomething to be done by the recipient: from whence may be gathered, that as the body and blood in the Sacrament are not verily and indeed taken by the unworthy communicant, ſo neither is the Holy Spirit received by him who undergoes the ceremony only, as a meer form neceſſary to come at the income of a living.

4. There are ſome people diſturbed at the dignities and revenues eſtabliſhed in the Church: if they have ſo contemptible an opinion of Religion as to wiſh it were utterly loſt out of the world, there is good ground for their diſturbance. But I will not ſuppoſe this of them, and as thoſe who complain loudeſt are ſuch as would be thought very rational men, they will hardly expect the world ſhould be well inſtructed by means of extraordinary illuminations, and ſupernatural impulſe imparted to private perſons, qualifying them inſtantaneouſly for the office: or if the thing were doubtful in ſpeculation, experience teſtifies what wild work has been made by perſons under-

undertaking it upon thoſe pretences. For it is well known the doctrines of Religion may be groſſly miſunderſtood and perverted to very miſchievous purpoſes, as well through meer ignorance, indiſcretion or haſtineſs of zeal, as by deſign. Therefore the due management of it muſt be allowed to be a ſcience as difficult to be learned as any that are current in the world, as well deſerving to be made the profeſſion of a man's life, and to have a particular education ſuited thereto.

If we do not think a common artificer well qualified for his buſineſs without having ſerved an apprenticeſhip, ſurely this, which is a more dangerous edge tool than the ſaw and the hatchet, requires an early preparation to handle it ſkilfully. Now if we conſider how early the preparation muſt be begun, and the determination made, between an equipment for the ſhop or the pulpit, we ſhall quickly find it neceſſary that ſome temporal encouragement ſhould be caſt into the ſcale. It is a great thing, too great to be compaſſed, for a man mature in years, experience and judgement, to act invariably with a chearful induſtry upon the ſole motive of doing ſervice to his fellow creatures without aid of private intereſt: for we are but ſenſitivo-rational animals, incapable of attaining the Stoical love of rectitude for its own ſake, to require it of us would be expecting to find us Angels inſtead of Men; the

higheſt uſe we can make of our underſtanding is to reſtrain the exorbitances of our deſires, and chooſe ſuch among them as may ſerve to ſpur us on in the proſecution of our rational deſigns.

But nothing of this is to be looked for in a boy who is to go to ſchool or to an apprenticeſhip, neither is there one in a thouſand who makes the option for himſelf, being generally put upon their line of life by their parents or friends: and even when a lad does take a ſtrong turn himſelf, if the truth were known, I believe it would appear owing to ſomething conſtantly chimed in his ears, rather than his own original choice. But the friends and parents have the temporal advancement of their children in view, grandeur and riches are their incitements: they conſider life as a lottery, and would not venture their child in a claſs where there were no great prizes, for thoſe are the neceſſary lures to draw in adventurers: if they propoſe an apprenticeſhip, it is a ſtep into my lord Mayor's coach; if the law, they have in view the great purſe and the Seals; if divinity, they think of the lawn ſleeves and the Lordſhip.

It becomes not me to pronounce upon the honours and poſſeſſions of the Church, whether they be more ample than neceſſary, whether properly diſtributed in proportion to the duties annexed, or whether rightly conferred accord-

ing to the true intent of their inſtitution. Thoſe are matters belonging to wiſer heads and higher powers. All I contend for is, that without temporal encouragements ſufficiently inviting to thoſe who have the diſpoſal of young people, labourers would be wanting in the vineyard. I knew a very good man, a diſſenter, whoſe ſon deſired to be bred up to the miniſtry; but he would not let him, becauſe he ſaid there was nothing to be gotten in their way above a hundred pounds a year. Now the talents of the lad were ſuch as, I believe, would ſcarce have raiſed him to a hundred pounds a year, if he had gone upon the eſtabliſhed line: but the father thought higher of him; and ſo I ſuppoſe do moſt fathers.

Therefore if there were not a poſſibility of ſome conſiderable matters, few would be put upon the liſts who were not of ſuch unpromiſing genius, as that even the partiality of their friends could not judge them fit for any thing elſe; or in ſuch low circumſtances as that the bare exemption from bodily labour would be deemed a prize. But if it be thought that any thing can be taught to read over a ſervice intelligibly, yet I hope it will be allowed that ſome better qualified officers are requiſite in the Church militant: for there are ſo many attacks made againſt Religion, ſo many miſapprehenſions and perverſions of its doctrines, ſo many new vices and follies continually ſtarting up,

up, that plodding induſtry and downright probity alone cannot manage them without acuteneſs and ſagacity of parts improved by a compaſs of learning. And there is the more need to provide for ſtore of hopeful plants, becauſe out of every ſcore of ingenious boys in the mother's eſtimation, it is good luck if one turns out an ingenious man when come abroad into the world.

Neither will acuteneſs of parts and depth of learning anſwer the purpoſe compleatly without aid of other qualifications; men of a ſcholaſtic turn are commonly too abſtruſe and rigid, they caſt Religion into a form which is fit for nobody's wear but their own: therefore it is requiſite there ſhould be ſome mingled among them, who by a competent knowledge of human nature, of the manners and characters of mankind, may be able to turn the labours of the others to general uſe, to render ſpeculation practical, and diſcern what is feaſible as well as what is deſirable. But diſcretion and knowledge of the world are not to be learned at grammar ſchool, nor at college: they muſt be gotten at home, if gotten at all, from the parents or perſons with whom they uſe familiarly to converſe: whence it appears fitting there ſhould be ſuch prizes in the lottery, as may look tempting in the eye of families where there are opportunities of ſtudying this ſcience.

But leſt I ſhould give offence by thus making private intereſt, ambition and vanity, the avenues to the ſacred function, I ſhall obſerve, that this cannot be thought a reflection upon the order in me, who have been as little complaiſant to all orders whatever among men: having laid down, that private ſatisfaction is the conſtant ſpring of all our actions, that every man's own Good is his proper ultimate end of purſuit; deduced all the virtues, the pureſt love and benevolence from ſelfiſhneſs; and grafted the ſcyons of Uranian Venus upon the wild ſtocks ſhot up ſpontaneouſly in the garden of Nature. For our own deſires are moſtly of the tranſlated kind, having been transferred from the end to the means, which from thenceforward become an end or ultimate point of view; and a tranſlated deſire generally contains a vigour and firmneſs proportionable to that of the original deſire from whence it was transferred: therefore I ſee nothing ſhould hinder the deſire of advancement in the world from ſerving for a proper ſtock whereon to graft a ſolid and genuine piety.

The young adventurer, I ſuppoſe, will be exhorted to make himſelf maſter in his ſcience for gaining the better credit and ſucceſs therein: if he have any ſpirit and induſtry, he will endeavour to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Religion he is to teach to others; and the principal part of what he is to inculcate being a command

command of the paſſions, a preference of future happineſs before preſent advantage, a glowing ſerenity of hope in the divine Goodneſs, a ſincere attachment to the general intereſt, and an unreſerved charity to all mankind; to preſs thoſe things by the moſt animating topics, and enforce them by a juſtneſs of reaſoning and ſolidity of argument; he cannot well avoid taking a tincture of them himſelf in his progreſs. So that by continual application of his thoughts to thoſe trains he may acquire as much indifference to worldly concerns, as pure a holineſs, as ſtrong a love of rectitude, as hearty judicious zeal to do good, as human nature, in this diſeaſed ſtate and under the circumſtances ſurrounding it, is capable of attaining. And if the ſtudent in divinity will ruminate ſeriouſly upon what has been ſuggeſted above in the ſecond ſection concerning the call which is to qualify him for admiſſion into the ſacred office, I apprehend it will contribute not a little towards making the ſcyon take good hold and imbibe the vigour and ſucculence of the ſtock: which being mellowed and meliorated in the paſſage, may produce a plentiful crop of excellent fruits.

CHAP. XXV.

Articles.

GREAT outcry has been made againſt impoſing articles of belief upon mens conſciences, and invading their moſt inviolable and unalienable rights by denying them even the liberty of thought. One would think the perſons who join in this clamour were foreigners, who had juſt gotten ſome hiſtory three hundred years old, and from thence taken their idea of our conſtitution and polity upon what they read there of the Popiſh tyranny and perſecutions. But I know of no impoſition now put upon the conſcience, nor fetters attempted to be caſt upon the liberty of thought. An Engliſh gentleman may believe the world was made by chance, or the moon made of cream cheeſe, if he pleaſes: no ſcrutiny will be taken into his thoughts by the Courts of Juſtice, nor if diſcovered will he incur any corporal or pecuniary penalty thereby, ſince the writ de heretico comburendo has been taken away. Very true, you ſay; a man may think what he will becauſe you cannot hinder him by all the laws you can contrive, but then he muſt keep his thoughts to himſelf, and this it ſeems is a grievous

grievous bondage: for liberty of thought is nothing without liberty of expreſſing the thoughts upon all occaſions, and in all companies.

It may ſeem ſurprizing, that in a country where liberty is our idol, it ſhould be ſo little underſtood; but each man's notion of liberty ſeems to be an unbounded licence for him to do whatever he fancies, without regard to his neighbours or compatriots. Whereas liberty ſubſiſts by reſtraint, therefore if unbounded muſt neceſſarily deſtroy itſelf; for the law, its only ſafeguard, operates no otherwiſe than by penalties reſtraining from the practices prohibited thereby. The law can give no liberty to any body directly, but by conſequence of the reſtraints it lays upon others: for as two negatives make an affirmative, ſo the reſtraining of him who might uſe his natural or civil power to infringe the rights and liberties of his fellow ſubjects, preſerves them therein. And where they may be invaded by an expreſſion of the thoughts, it is for the intereſts of liberty to reſtrain them from being vented. A man may think another diſhoneſt, or write down ſuch opinion in his cloſet without offending the law: for if ſomebody ſhould ſteal away the paper, whereby his ſentiments might be proved upon him, I apprehend no conviction could be obtained thereupon. But if he calls him rogue to his face by way of abuſe, or behind his back

to diſcredit him with other people, this is an infringement of his liberty to enjoy the benefit of a good name, and the tranquillity of his own mind: therefore the law reſtrains ſuch practices out of its regard to liberty.

2. Nature pours out her produce in common among the whole ſpecies: ſhe leaves every man at liberty to gather the fruits of the earth wherever he can find them. This will appear manifeſt upon imagining a number of perſons not bound together by any compact or government, caſt upon ſome uninhabited iſland: where there would be no prior claim of one perſon above another, but each would be entitled to make his uſes of any thing falling within his reach. It is eaſy to ſee what waſte and deſtruction muſt enſue upon the general exerciſe of ſuch liberty: how prone the ſtronger would be to abridge the weaker in their ſhare of it, and how many advantages and conveniences might be procured by the proper limitation of it. Theſe conſiderations, I apprehend, are the true foundation of order, regulation and government: which draw men out of the ſtate of Nature to place them in a better ſtate, wherein they may have larger ſcope of liberty to work out a diſtant benefit for themſelves, without being hindered in their progreſs or defeated of their purpoſe by one another.

Thus there are two kinds of liberty: that of Nature, of the ſavage, and the wild beaſt,

ſubject

ſubject to no reſtriction, nor controul of every preſent fancy that ſhall ſtart up: and that of reaſon and prudence, which cannot ſubſiſt without ſome limitation upon the former, but is much more beneficial, as ſecuring the profits of induſtry and contrivance, and extenſive ſchemes requiring time to bring their fruits to maturity. For as the road to pleaſure lies ſometimes through ſelf-denial, ſo a ſeaſonable reſtraint is a neceſſary avenue to a larger extent of our powers and freedom.

Now this latter kind muſt be had in view by whoever ſets up for the champion of liberty, or he betrays the cauſe he pretends to maintain: for if the eſſence of liberty be placed in any thing prejudicial to ſociety, it muſt quickly and deſervedly fall into diſcredit among mankind. They may be perhaps beguiled for a while with the ſpecioufneſs of a name, but when experience has made them ſenſible of the evil conſequences, it will ſoon become a name of reproach and abhorrence, as much as ever it was eſteemed a privilege and a bleſſing before: nor is there any thing more dangerous to our religious or civil rights, than a miſtaken or outrageous zeal for either. Even liberty of conſcience reſpects only the free exerciſe of thoſe we eſteem religious duties, but does not juſtify us in obſtructing other perſons in the like exerciſe of what are judged ſo by them: for this would be falling into the too common

error

error of placing our own liberty in the right of cramping that of our neighbour.

Therefore I can come ſo near to the exceptionable paſſage in Tillotſon's ſermon upon Joſhua XXIV. 15. preached before King Charles II. as to think it no breach of the liberty belonging to private perſons to overthrow a form of religion eſtabliſhed. For though there are caſes wherein this might lawfully be done, without waiting for a ſpecial commiſſion from heaven authenticated by miracles, yet thoſe caſes muſt be ſuch as ſhall make the omiſſion of it ſinful. A man to merit excuſe for ſo doing, muſt believe himſelf authorized and enjoined thereto by the precepts of the Goſpel: ſo that his act is matter of obligation and neceſſity, not of liberty, any more than paying his debts, or ſaving the life of one whom he can reſcue from danger. And if the puniſhment of him be wrong, it is ſo, not as being an infringement of his natural rights, but as exacting obedience to the commands of men preferable to thoſe of God.

Liberty has commonly been joined with property as neceſſarily ſtanding or falling together: but how can a man be ſaid to enjoy his property, or the liberty of making what uſes are to be made of it, unleſs all other perſons be reſtrained from reaping the corn he ſows? Nor can there be liberty to purſue any plan, for the benefit of mankind, while there is liberty left

to

to all others to obſtruct its operations. And the caſe is the ſame with reſpect to communities, who can no more carry their ſalutary plans into execution while liable to continual interruption from any quarter, than a private man can avail himſelf of his property. Therefore the law and the magiſtrate are armed with authority to reſtrain the wanton and the ſelfiſh from giving ſuch interruption, that ſo there may be free courſe for every good proviſion to take its full effect: the preſervation of which free courſe, and conſequently the maintenance of a proper authority, is a ſpecies of liberty as much as any other more commonly underſtood by the name.

Nevertheleſs it muſt be owned, that power, either through deſign or miſtake, is ſometimes extended farther than neceſſary for the purpoſes above-mentioned, in which caſe it becomes pernicious to liberty: and then he that can, will merit applauſe by refuſing ſubmiſſion to it himſelf, and leſſening its influence upon other people. But all oppoſition upon any other motive, and even upon that motive if haſtily taken up without good grounds to ſupport it, muſt be pronounced licentiouſneſs, refractorineſs, or at beſt, inconſiderateneſs.

Every impediment thrown againſt the exerciſe of a power, whether belonging to private perſons or communities, or rulers entruſted by them with authority, comes within the definition

tion of Reſtraint, and the exemption from it within that of Liberty, but ſince the powers of men frequently interfere, their operations being incompatible with one another, the intereſts of liberty will be beſt ſupported by ſecuring a free ſcope to thoſe which are moſt beneficial. This then is the proper ſubject of careful examination by ſuch as find themſelves prompted to employ the means in their hands for obſtructing the ſchemes and endeavours of others, namely, the conſequences expectant upon following or forbearing to follow their impulſe: for nothing deſerves the name of liberty, from whence more damage than profit will redound upon the whole.

3. One of the moſt valuable liberties of mankind is that of forming into ſocieties, and enjoying the benefit of regulations made for public order and convenience, whether fallen into by general agreement among themſelves, or eſtabliſhed by governors to whom the care of making public proviſions has been committed by the conſtitution of the community: and he that ſhould endeavour to propagate opinions tending to diſunite or diſturb the ſociety, to weaken the authority of thoſe regulations, or hinder the good effects of them, would be an infringer of that liberty, and conſequently a proper object for the reſtraint of the law. Therefore in aſcertaining what liberty may be allowed to be taken with the liberty of mankind

kind above mentioned, conſideration ſhould be had which of the two liberties is the more valuable, and whether of the reſtraints is likely to be attended with the greater inconvenience and miſchief to the public. But I believe if it were fairly conſidered how great indulgence is given in this country to every conſcientious declaration of a man's ſentiments, how large a freedom to all kinds of ſober argumentation, and that none other reſtraints hang over us unleſs againſt wantonneſs, ſelf-conceit, anger and indiſcretion, which may do hurt to the vulgar and unwary: there will be found much leſs inconvenience in obliging private perſons to ſuppreſs ſome of their ſparkling notions, than in a general licence to throw out indiſcriminately whatever comes into their fancies.

We are a religious as well as civil community, and rules have beene ſtabliſhed for our guidance in both; nor could it be otherwiſe, for the people will have ſome imaginations or other concerning the things unſeen: if you do not provide them with a rational ſyſtem, they will run after conjurors, diviners, tales of fairies and apparitions, and lie open to the firſt crafty or enthuſiaſtic deceiver who thinks fit to take them in hand. For Nature has given us all a propenſity to look farther than the bare objects of ſenſe, which propenſity is capable of being turned to excellent or pernicious purpoſes: therefore it is highly expedient, that due order

ſhould

ſhould be taken for the management of this, as well as of our other appetites, which are the objects of civil government. And it is likewiſe fitting, that what order is taken ſhould have the protection of the laws, which are not more ſcrutinizing into the ſentiments upon matters of Religion, than of civil polity; for no man is allowed to ſay whatever he pleaſes of the latter.

If there be any man ſo wrong-headed as to fancy the privilege of certain perſons againſt the common proceſs of law for their debts unjuſt, and oppreſſive upon the ſubject; while he keeps his notion to himſelf, nobody will queſtion him about it; or if he happens to drop it inadvertently, I ſuppoſe no notice would be taken: but if he takes pains to publiſh and maintain it in the world, he would very ſoon be had up before his betters, and incur the cenſure of that houſe whom we all regard as the guardians and protectors of our liberties, as well of thinking as acting. But what more is deſired on behalf of the Church, than that if any man entertains an opinion ſubverſive of her doctrines, he ſhould keep it to himſelf, and not endeavour to propagate it in public?

4. Nothing need be urged here to prove the expedience of inculcating a ſenſe of Religion among the people: but multitudes want either capacity or leiſure to think ſufficiently upon this ſubject, of themſelves; they may paſs ſome

ſome judgment upon particular points or arguments propoſed to them, but could never form a compleat and conſiſtent ſyſtem: greater multitudes would beſtow very little thought upon it, unleſs continually reminded or exhorted thereto: and none have any judgment of their own ſo early as it is neceſſary to imbue them with principles to be the foundation of their future reaſonings. Therefore the polity of a nation would be defective, if there were no proviſion made for inſtructing the ignorant, warning the thoughtleſs, and educating children: but how can ſuch proviſion be made, without a ſummary of doctrine and ſet of articles compoſing the ſyſtem to be taught? For would you have a law enacted that the people ſhall be duly inſtructed, and that parents ſhould educate their children, without giving the leaſt direction in what manner, or upon what points the inſtruction and education ſhall be carried on? This would be leaving mankind in their ſtate of Nature, and witholding that benefit of a community which might be procured by perſons in public character, whoſe extenſive views and large information may enable them to diſcern what is expedient for the generality, and guard againſt ſpecious notions drawing pernicious conſequences, not foreſeen by perſons in private ſtation.

In the infancy of a Religion the principles of it may be few; but when thoſe few come to be

be branched out by comments, inferences and corollaries, grafted thereupon, ſome of them perverſions and corruptions of the originals, it will be neceſſary to make a more copious proviſion for correcting thoſe enormities. We ought to preſume the compilers of our Articles framed ſuch as in their judgment contained the ſoundeſt ſyſtem of Religion, and moſt expedient fot inſtilling ſalutary ſentiments into the minds of the people. As they were men, they certainly were not infallible; and in articles prepared for national uſe, there may poſſibly be ſomething occaſional, not neceſſary for the maintenance of true Religion at all times, but calculated upon the condition of the preſent: if any thing of this ſort ſhould appear, there is a legiſlature always in being who may rectify whatever, upon proper examination, might be found amiſs, and accommodate what might be judged unſuitable to the temper and occaſions of our own times.

And for the manner of underſtanding them, this may be and has been accommodated to the current ways of thinking, by tacit conſent of the people themſelves: for whoever will examine the writings of the laſt century, comparing them with thoſe of our cotemporaries, may perceive, that although we ſtill retain the ſame ſet of articles, we find in them much leſs of the myſterious, the marvellous and the magical, than our forefathers did a hundred

years

years ago. Therefore I hope it will be allowed a lawful and honeſt intention, however defectively executed, with which I go through my preſent labours; for implicit faith will not go down now a days: men are not eaſily ſilenced without being convinced, nor will they be made to ſwallow myſteries, to them unintelligible, by the drenching-horn of eccleſiaſtical authority. It is then working in ſervice of the Church to endeavour ſhowing, that without change of a ſingle word in her doctrines, they may be ſo expounded as to render them conſiſtent with the diſcoveries of Reaſon and Philoſophy, and to bear ſtanding a cloſe inſpection by the light of Nature.

If the ſyſtem of doctrines eſtabliſhed is believed beneficial by thoſe who have in charge to make proviſion for the public welfare in all its parts, it is natural and incumbent upon them to have the benefit ſecured by the protection of laws; and this is all that is had in view: for if the vulgar, who want the aid of public proviſions moſt, are not diſturbed in the enjoyment of them by jokes and ſophiſms, and other attacks upon things recommended to them as ſacred, the law is ſatisfied. It makes no inquiſition into men's private ſentiments, nor diſcourſes among their friends or in their families, nor whether they breed up their children in orthodox principles: neither does it prohibit the publication of works not perfectly reconcil-

able with orthodoxy, provided they do not directly tend to ſhake the popular tenets. For Berkeley's denial of body, ſpace and motion, Hartley's performing all human action by the mechanical impulſe of vibratiuncles, and Burnet's theory of the earth, muſt I doubt be counted heterodox by a rigid believer in the thirty nine articles: yet they never fell under the laſh of the law, nor even ſuffered in their reputation of being good men, and pious Chriſtians.

As for thoſe things which ſome affect to call perſecutions, they are civil and not eccleſiaſtical proviſions: Tythes and Church rates are not levied upon the Quaker by authority of the Articles, but of the common and ſtatute laws. The former of thoſe payments are ſometimes lay eſtates, wherein the Church has no concern: and it is eaſy to ſee how ruinous it muſt prove, ſo far as to unſtring the very ſinews of government, if the plea of conſcience was admitted to exempt any man from the payment of money. You would find a ſect ſpring up in the home counties, who would pronounce all taxes unjuſt that are not equally laid: ſo becauſe the northern and weſtern parts contribute a ſmall proportion to the land tax, it would go againſt their conſciences to pay any. Others would quote the Craftſman and Johnſon's dictionary, to prove all exciſes wicked things: therefore would ſcruple ſubmiting to any upon their

their malt, or their beer. In ſhort, we ſhould grow ſo ſqueamiſhly conſcientious, that the Parliament would never be able to find ways and means for raiſing the ſupplies without the ſeverities of a perſecution.

The diſcouragements caſt upon the Papiſts were deſigned for ſecurity of the ſtate, not upon account of their religious principles: and if the diſſenters are accidentally involved in ſome of them, it is not a clog upon their liberty of thinking or acting, but only an excluſion from places of profit or truſt. Nor does it prove a bar to the moſt ſenſible among them, who conſequently are fitteſt to ſerve the public: for we find they can conform occaſionally, juſt enough to ſatisfy the law. As for others, who are not likely to be ever the better if the bar were taken off, I would intreat them to examine whether it is really conſcience the bar lies againſt: for there are other ſprings of action that will veil themſelves under the appearance of conſcience. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, extremely hard to be fathomed even by the owner, ſo as to diſtinguiſh the true motives of proceeding upon every occaſion, from plauſible colourings occurring in juſtification of them. There is an attachment to the cuſtoms one has been bred up in, a ſhame of departing from old acquaintance, a fear of incurring their ſecret diſlike, a trouble and aukwardneſs at being put out of ones way

by new forms: and the reluctance ſpringing from thoſe cauſes may eaſily be miſtaken for ſcruples of conſcience.

Nor is it ſo likely that conſcience ſhould interfere in the caſe now as in former times, for when a ſuperſtitious value was placed in externals, it might go againſt the conſcience to countenance the ſuperſtition by joining in the uſe of them: but now, that nobody regards them otherwiſe than as expedients for decency and order, the ſuperſtition lies on the other ſide in imagining them to contain an intrinſic depravity which will vitiate the pureſt devotions of the heart: therefore it muſt be a very particular conſtitution of conſcience that ſhould make it boggle at them. I do not urge this with a deſire that either the Public or private perſons ſhould interfere in matters of conſcience: I only mean to exhort every man to ſtudy carefully his own motives, and know what are thoſe which really actuate him; for there are frequent and flagrant miſtakes committed in the world upon this article. And ſince I ſuppoſe it will be acknowledged that a voluntary, not compulſive uniformity of Religion would be a deſirable thing, it behoves every man to conſider how far the regard to old friends, old cuſtoms and habits, will juſtify him in forbearing to contribute his part towards ſo deſirable an event: the judgment belongs to none other than to himſelf, only let him make it maturely

upon

upon thorough and impartial examination of the cauſe.

But why ſhould we complain of the laws in force for preſervation of our Religion, when thoſe made for ſecurity of the ſtate go a great deal farther, yet without affording a handle for finding fault to the moſt zealous aſſerters of liberty? for our political creed is more narrowly ſcrutinized into, than our religious: inquiſition is made there into our private ſentiments and the ſecret thoughts of our heart. It is not enough to behave quietly and ſubmiſſively under all lawful commands of the magiſtrate, to make no endeavours to propagate an opinion contrary to the Act of Settlement, nor even drop a word in diſparagement thereof: but we are called upon ſolemnly and ſincerely to declare upon oath, that without any equivocation, mental evaſion, or ſecret reſervation whatſoever, we do believe in our conſcience the Pretender has not any right to the Crown of this realm. It will not ſuffice that we never try to perſuade any body, nor maintain either in writing or diſcourſe, that Princes deprived by the Pope may be depoſed: but are required to ſwear, that we do from our heart abhor, deteſt and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and poſition.

The law in both caſes will not reſt contented with obliging people to keep their thoughts to themſelves; but inſiſts upon know-

ing whether they are orthodox, and that under penalty of being ſubject to double taxes. Obſerve further, that this laſt declaration may ſeem, in ſome people's underſtanding, to contain a matter of meer opinion: for they may conceive that declaring a thing damnable upon oath, is the ſame as ſwearing they believe every man muſt be damned who holds it. Now though it is certainly of concern to the ſtate, whether an Engliſh ſubject holds this poſition himſelf; yet it ſeems a meer ſpeculative queſtion, whether he believes that all other perſons whatſoever and whereſoever, who do hold it, ſhall aſſuredly be damned for their impiety and hereſy.

5. Having taken notice of this eagerneſs of ſtile we are enjoined to uſe in the moſt ſolemn expreſſion of our loyalty, I ſhall venture a ſhort comment upon it: not meerly by way of diſſertation, but as leading into a clearer underſtanding of what little I have further to offer upon the ſubject of this Chapter. It would be highly irreverent to ſuppoſe the wiſdom of the nation could be ſo poſſeſſed with a paroxyſm of zeal, as, like a common ſwearer, to throw out a ſtring of paſſionate words without weighing their import: therefore we muſt ſeek for ſome rational meaning in the epithet Damnable.

As openeſs of heart is now univerſally and juſtly eſteemed an honour to the poſſeſſor, we may without offence ſuppoſe the legiſlature did not

not themſelves believe that every poor villager in Spain and Portugal, bred up from his cradle under the Jeſuits, who ſhould really believe in his conſcience that the Pope had full power eccleſiaſtical and temporal over all nations upon earth, would certainly go to the Devil for that error: therefore could never intend, that by calling the poſition damnable, we ſhould underſtand it muſt neceſſarily damn every perſon without exception who ſhould be deluded into it. But we muſt preſume they regarded the doctrines contained in the Act of Settlement as neceſſary to the ſalvation of the State, and the Papal authority here ſo palpably abſurd and groundleſs a notion, that nobody in this enlightened country could entertain it without his judgment being blended by ſome party madneſs, or private intereſt, or ſeditiouſneſs and turbulence of diſpoſition, or other damnable perverſeneſs, inconſiſtent with that temper of mind which is our preparation for future happineſs: and they judged it expedient for the public ſecurity, to throw a diſcouragement upon all who would not declare the ſame upon oath.

Upon this conſtruction it appears, that our Governors concerned themſelves ſolely with preſerving the peace and ſafety of the conſtitution, and with the ſentiments of perſons under their juriſdiction, nor had any thought of foreigners, nor of deciding what doctrines and poſitions might be fatal or innocent to them:

why then may not we underſtand the Church with the like reſtriction, where ſhe pronounces upon an article of Faith? For thoſe who clamour againſt her as an enemy to liberty, object, that beſides the ſanction of laws reſtraining them from gaining the ſuperlative credit they might raiſe by their wit and ſhrewdneſs; ſhe endeavours to blaſt their character in the world by teaching her children to condemn them as reprobates devoted to eternal perdition: therefore they muſt be careful to keep their tongue between their teeth, leſt if they ſhould drop out a diſreſpectful word againſt any form or ceremony, or unintelligible theorem eſteemed ſacred, they ſhould be thought wicked men capable of every thing bad. And this they call an infringement upon the liberty of thought, becauſe I ſuppoſe they have ſuch an incontinence of tongue, as to render it unſafe for them to think what they muſt not utter.

But if they meet with this treatment from any body, why ſhould they charge it upon the Church? for they may well know that children will get many notions in their heads they were never taught by their maſters: and they ought to be the more candid in this caſe, becauſe they themſelves are liable to the like infirmity of judging hardly of others for an article of belief; for if they hear any body drop a word in favour of miracle, prophecy or revelation, or uſe the words Faith, Grace, Sanctification, or the like, ſeriouſly,

ſeriouſly, they preſently know him to be a weak man, half witted, capable of being perſuaded into any thing ſilly, and undeſerving to be dealt with as a rational creature; which is their kind of anathema.

But the Church, like our temporal Governors, muſt be preſumed to concern herſelf only with thoſe under her authority: ſhe decides nothing concerning the Turks or Tartars, or others out of her pale. It became her to enjoin the cultivation of ſuch ſentiments as ſhe eſteemed ſalutary to perſons who would liſten to her, to point out ſuch as would overthrow the good purpoſes intended by them, and to warn againſt any who might diſcover a diſpoſition to inſinuate notions contrary to thoſe ſhe had recommended. This is no more than what I ſuppoſe our objectors themſelves would do: they would inſtruct their pupils in ſome ſyſtem of opinions; would tell them, This is a uſeful principle neceſſary to be kept in mind, This is a fatal miſtake, This a pernicious abſurdity; and would caution them againſt perſons inſtilling oppoſite notions. Therefore her children may learn from her to ſtand upon their guard againſt opinions ſhe condemns as heretical, and againſt perſons who give juſt cauſe to ſuſpect their being infected with them: If they go further to pronounce upon the perſons themſelves, in what condition they ſtand with reſpect to their own ſalvation, it is an excurſion of their own beyond the

the bounds prescribed them, for they have no warrant from her for so doing.

6. The harshest expression I can recollect, is that used in the eighteenth article, where is declared, that those are to be holden accursed who presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth: but why should we give the Accursed here a larger compass than the Damnable in the oath of abjuration? or understand any more thereby, than that she should have her members look upon it as a pernicious and fatal error, to imagine the choice of one's Religion a matter of indifference, to be made at pleasure lightly, or upon temporal convenience, amongst all that are current in the world; and would have them shy of persons attempting to justify that error, as dangerous persons for them to converse with.

Nor yet is this a decision of her own making, but a repetition of that made in the Gospel, which declares, He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now in order to determine the latitude of the word Accursed in the article, let us go to the fountain head, and examine whether the condemnation in the Gospel be so rigid as to extend to all persons whatever, who are not Christians. In the first place I presume it will be admitted,

admitted, that the Scriptures were given ſolely for our inſtruction in matters of faith and practice, not to ſatisfy our curioſity upon points of ſpeculation: now I conceive it to be matter of meer ſpeculation, no ways affecting our intereſts, what ſhall be the fate of any other man in the next world; therefore we are to look for no information there, nor conſtrue any thing therein as a deciſion upon that point. But if this be not enough, let us turn back to the verſe immediately preceding, where we may find that God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved.

We learn from Saint Paul, that God left not the heathen world without a witneſs of himſelf, having manifeſted his eternal Power and Godhead by the things that were ſeen, and that the Gentiles, not having the law, were a law unto themſelves by means of that written in their hearts; but a law implies ſome benefit to be obtained by obedience thereto, nor have we any foundation to imagine, the Gentiles before Chriſt might not find acceptance with God. If then he ſent not his ſon to condemn the world, they could not be put into a worſe condition than they were in before; and if he ſent him to ſave the world, obſerve the world is here uſed collectively, and ſince as I have ſhown in the Chapter on divine Oeconomy and elſewhere, there is a general intereſt of the ſpecies, and a

progreſs

progreſs of human nature towards perfection, faith in Chriſt may be neceſſary for the ſalvation of mankind, and yet not neceſſary for that of every particular perſon. Or ſhould it be proved univerſally neceſſary, ſtill thoſe arguments deſerve conſideration which I have offered in the Chapter on Redemption, to ſhow, that an opportunity may be given for embracing it in the next world to ſuch as had none afforded them here.

Then if we go on to the next verſe following, we ſhall ſee what are the grounds of cenſure and who the perſons incurring it. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil. Here appears to be a voluntary choice made between darkneſs and light, by perſons ſeverally conſcious of evil or good deeds; but the good deeds ſpoken of two verſes below, as being manifeſted by the light, muſt be ſuch as were performed before coming thereinto: therefore it is poſſible that perſons not in the light may do good works wrought in God, and conſequently be good men accepted before him. Since then a criminal infidelity muſt be a wilful rejection of the light becauſe of evil deeds, we can never know a man's character meerly by his creed, even among perſons who converſe daily with Chriſtians: for there are ſo many various ways of conception, ſo many abſurdities and corrup-

tions

tions ſometimes faſtened upon our holy Religion by its profeſſors, as may turn it into a darkneſs impenetrable by the moſt careful eye. Nor unleſs we could pry into the heart to diſcern all the motives operating there, can we ſafely pronounce upon any man, whether he refuſes to come into the light of free choice, or through miſapprehenſion and invincible ignorance.

It is neceſſary for our own ſecurity to judge upon actions and ſentiments, that we may know how to take our meaſures properly, and what degree of vigilance to apply for, avoiding ſuch as would be poiſonous to us, in proportion to their degree of virulence. But there are wide differences as well in the mental as bodily conſtitutions of men; and as poiſons are ſome of the vital juices in ſcorpions, vipers and many animals, ſo there may be men in whom poiſonous opinions are innocent, or even contributive to their health of mind; but it is our duty to think the beſt of every one. For the ſame God who created the glorious ſtars in their conſtellations, created alſo the crooked ſerpent, whom we muſt therefore believe compleat in his nature and uſeful in the ſituation wherein he is placed: for when God looked upon all the works that he had made, behold they were very good. It behoves us then to beware both of the natural and metaphorical ſerpent, to keep out of his way leſt he bite us; but we have nothing

nothing to do with the light wherein he ſtands before his Maker.

Therefore what ſevere expreſſions we read againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, and others, we muſt preſume were given the Jewiſh converts for the hardneſs of their hearts; becauſe they were too groſs to diſtinguiſh in their averſions between the man and his opinions: but it was not ſo from the beginning, that is, not in the original deſign of the Goſpel. And we may ſay to the rigid and cenſorious, as Jeſus did to the diſciples who wanted to call down fire from heaven, Ye know not what ſpirit ye are of: certainly not the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which is a doctrine of peace and love, and of that Charity which believeth all things, hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil. So it is no proof of our orthodoxy, that we are forward to judge other perſons, but a direct oppoſition both to the ſpirit and letter of the Goſpel, for it is one of the precepts in the ſermon upon the mount, Judge not, that ye be not judged; and if there be any practice deſerving our deteſtation as impious, heretical and damnable, ſurely this muſt be ſo, which Chriſt has expreſſly declared, will draw down judgment upon the practiſers.

End of Part III. Vol. III.